DW BULLETIN
THE MONTHLY NEWS 'ZINE
NUMBER 40 NOVEMBER 1986

NEXT SEASON DEFINITE ...AND THAT'S OFFICIAL

STOP PRESS: WEDNESDAY, 27 OCTOBER AS WE WERE GOING TO PRESS THIS ISSUE, DWB WAS INFORMED THAT BBC DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMES MICHAEL GRADE HAS CONFIRMED IN A LETTER TO THE DWAS CT EDITOR NEIL HUTCHINGS THAT A 24TH SEASON OF DOCTOR WHO IS DEFINITELY ON THE CARDS !

Although the full contents of the letter aren't known at the time of going to press, it is believed Grade states in it that although he wasn't very happy with the current season, there were very firm plans for a 24th Season of the world's longest-running sci-fi series and that there will be some major changes . . .

So today DWB contacted Michael Grade's office for a statement, but although he was held up in a meeting, his secretary confirmed categorically than plans were indeed afoot for a further series . We put our fear to her that although the wheels were in motion for a new series, would there not be a chance of Michael Grade cancelling it shortly before production commenced as he did with the original Season 23 ? She replied that, despite Season 23's disastrous ratings, there was *no question* of Grade throwing a spanner in the works ! .

So the fears over DOCTOR WHO's future can at last be at least temporarily allayed as Michael Grade is doing the decent and fair thing—despite apparent opposition from Head of Drama Jonathan Powell—in giving the show a REAL chance to prove itself with a NEW producer !

A Tribute to Dennis Spooner

PROLIFIC TELEVISION WRITER AND EX-'WHO SCRIPT EDITOR, DENNIS SPOONER, DIED OF A HEART ATTACK IN HEMEL HEMPSTED AGED 53 ON SATURDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER—ONLY 2 WEEKS AFTER HE ATTENDED THE DWAS 'PANOPTICON' IN KENSINGTON, LONDON, WHERE HE APPEARED VERY HIGH SPIRITED.

His lengthy showbiz career begun at an early age shortly after the war when he joined the Ralph Readers Gang Show and soon became a stand-up comic before turning gag-writer. This writing later developed into drama and he eventually teamed-up with the now equally prolific Brian Clemens and together they wrote several stage plays including Anybody for Murder and Will You Still Love Me in the Morning ?.

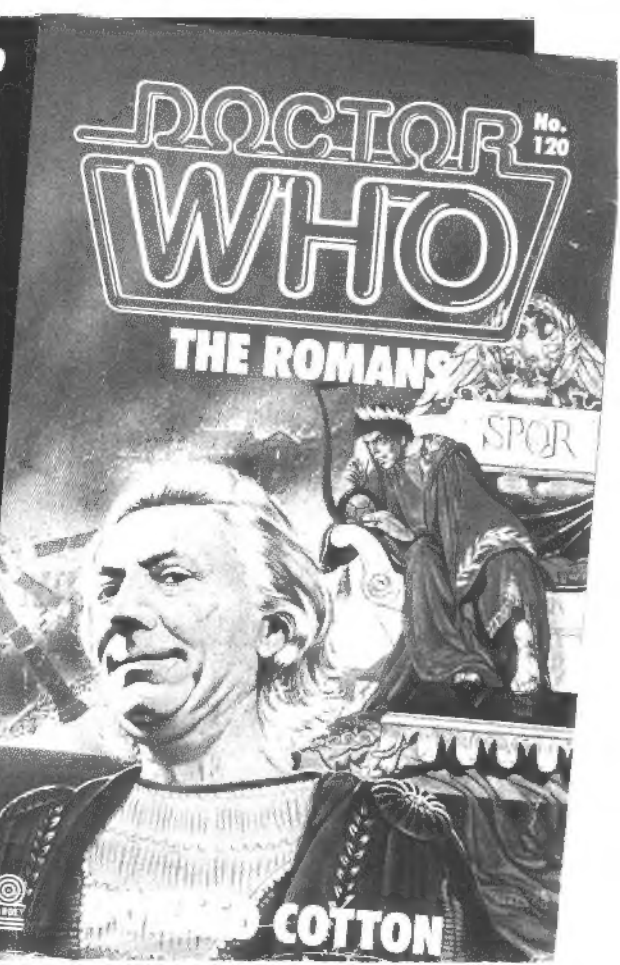
His complete contribution of television writing is too awesome to contemplate listing here, but among the many well-known series he wrote for included Jason King, Department S, The Champions, Randall & Hopkirk—Deceased, Thunderbirds , The Avengers and, of course DOCTOR WHO.

His penchant lay in historical stories and his first script based on the French Revolution—the 6 episode REIGN OF TERROR—brought to a close the first season. He then became script editor for 30 episodes of Season 2, which saw a notable increase in humour as demonstrated none more so than his whimsical THE ROMANS. His

Continued overleaf. . .

BELOW: Dennis Spooner at his last convention—DWAS' PanoptiCon VII
RIGHT: Donald Cotton's forthcoming adaption of Spooner's 1965 satire





GRADE 3, JN-T 1

TIM COLLINS REPORTS ON THE PROBABLE REASONS BEHIND SEASON 23's PLUMMETING RATINGS . . .

WITH DOCTOR WHO's RATINGS FALLING TO AN ALL-TIME LOW FOR COLOUR EPISODES, THIS IS CAUSE TO WONDER WHETHER MICHAEL GRADE WILL BLAME JN-T OR THE SHOW ITSELF ?

Yet the simple fact is that Grade himself is responsible for the bulk of the fall in viewing figures. The last episode of Season 22 attracted 7·67 million viewers, yet the first episode of Season 23 garnered a mere 4·97 million. This loss of nearly three million viewers over the hiatus period is due to a series of spectacular misjudgements by the newly promoted Director of Programmes at the BBC including:

i) Taking DOCTOR WHO off the air when it had ratings of over 7 million and failing to keep the Saturday time-slot 'warm' over the 18 month gap. Instead Grade scheduled a succession of ratings losers between 5 20 and 6 10 on Saturdays and thus created a tradition that the bulk of the audience would thus watch ITV at that time,

ii) The disastrous decision to postpone the launch of the BBC autumn schedules on a Saturday for seven days thus giving ITV a week's start to introduce The A-Team and Blind Date on August 31,

iii) Composing an exceptionally weak Saturday schedule. With the single exception of The Russ Abbott Show, ALL programmes on BBC1 on Saturday nights have been demolished by ITV's opposition,

iv) Grade's order of more humour in WHO and a revamp of the programme with no extra money resulted in 'Mysterious Planet' -a cheap, tacky and jokey show of limited appeal,

v) In particular, Grade erred in his personal decision to make Roland Rat — The Series the first programme in the Saturday night line-up. Indeed, Grade's action in luring the unappealing rodent from TV-AM at a greatly increased fee has been scorned by the British public. Roland Rat has consistently failed to even reach the Top 100 programmes and has failed to score much above 3 million on each attempt ! It is a success for DOCTOR WHO which has to follow this flop to regularly add a million viewers.

Michael Grade is therefore responsible for the fact that 3 million people who were happy to watch REVELATION OF THE DALEKS part 2 did not bother to tune in for the next transmitted episode of DOCTOR WHO The Mysterious Planet (remember, he also went back on the BBC's promises of repeats in the 18 month gap to reassure viewers of the show's existence but which inevitably failed to materialise).

However, the production team under long-serving Producer John Nathan-Turner must carry the blame for the fact that the ratings CONTINUED to fall. From the opening figure of 5 million the number of viewers rapidly slumped a further million and more to an all-time low for a colour DOCTOR WHO episode (even taking repeats into consideration) of 3·7.

While JN-T states elsewhere on these pages that he attributes the poor ratings to the pleasant weather, it is obvious that the uninspiring 'Mysterious Planet' failed to hook the public. So rather than encouraging more viewers to tune in, even a quarter of those who had watched the first episode failed to return in subsequent episodes.

Presumably in his sanctioning of a 24th Season, Grade has seen the error of his ways and maybe even realised that he couldn't use the excuse of the fall in ratings to axe DOCTOR WHO permanently. It should be stressed that Grade's neglect, parsimonious and poor scheduling cost the programme 3 million viewers, while JN-T's careless production lost a further million.

The strength of the concept of DOCTOR WHO was shown, however, by the fact that the first part of the much-improved 'Mindwarp' (transmitted on a particularly tropical late summer's evening -JN-T please note) gained increased ratings of 4·78 million.

Michael Grade lost the show 3 million viewers and he seems increasingly likely to be in the process of appointing a new production team to restore the situation. . .

THE COMPLETE SEASON 23 RATINGS AND TOP 100 POSITIONS SO FAR :

TRIAL OF A TIME LORD 1- 4·97m(69)

TRIAL OF A TIME LORD 2- 4·87m(75)

TRIAL OF A TIME LORD 3- 3·92m(98)

TRIAL OF A TIME LORD 4- 3·72m(97)
This is the lowest-rated colour episode EVER for a DOCTOR WHO transmission. Here is a list of comparable programmes broadcast in the same week as this episode ;

1	EASTENDERS	20·20m
5	BLIND DATE	13·85m
17	RUSS ABBOTT SHOW	10·43m
25	DALLAS	9·22m
27	THE A-TEAM	9·02m
28	CASUALTY	8·99m
29	TOMMOROW'S WORLD	8·91m
36	SPITTING IMAGE	8·29m
43	TELLY ADDICTS	7·97m
51	THE COLBYS	7·21m
63	LATE BREAKFAST SHOW	5·95m
70	FLINTSTONES	5·23m
77	BLUE PETER	4·50m
78	HE MAN	4·37m
93	SONS AND DAUGHTERS	3·95m
98	KRANKIES E' KOMIK	3·69m

TRIAL OF A TIME LORD 5- 4·78m(76).

THE MASTER WRITES

IN RESPONSE TO OUR NEWS ITEM IN DWB#38 HEADLINED ' AINLEY SETS THE RECORD STRAIGHT', ANTHONY AINLEY IS GIVEN THE RIGHT TO REPLY:

May I reply to your misleading and unattributed article about me ?

1) I am not taking sides in the JN-T / Eric Saward row. I consider them both friends,
2) I am not aware of the facts,
3) I don't know if Eric Saward jumped or if he was pushed,
4) JN-T has told me nothing—he is very discreet,
5) I've no knowledge of a scandal in the production office,
6) I've no knowledge of a cover -up there either,
7) These bust-ups are common in TV — the pressure is intense,
8) When I said actors were "puppets" and that JN-T pulled the strings and talked about relearning scripts, I was answering the question: "Do you enjoy your power and influence ?". I was trying to explain that actors have none, that in a sense we are like puppets. We say what we are told to say and do what directors tell us to do.

When a show is controversial a lot of obloquy hits the fan.

. . . A TRIBUTE TO DENNIS SPOONER

most fondly remembered contribution to the show, however, was the very first of the renegade Time Lords to grace the series; the Meddling (but irrisistably likeable) Monk, who was soon to return in the mammoth 12-part DALEKS' MASTERPLAN which Spooner co-wrote to help ease the writing pressures for Terry Nation. His services were also called for at the beginning of Patrick Troughton's reign when Gerry Davis found he was too busy constructing the rest of Season 4's story to spend time pruning-down David Whitaker's vastly over-length POWER OF THE DALEKS script, which Spooner was subsequently responsible for editing. After a brief return to the series in Season 7 his association with DOCTOR WHO came to an end, although he was approached many years later by Eric Saward to submit a new script, but sadly nothing ever came of it. However, as a regular guest at British conventions, he continued to keep fans amused by his hilarious anecdotes of his time on the show.

He is survived by a wife and three children.

STOP PRESS

Ian Marter, a diabetic was found dead in his home at the end of October.
A full tribute in the next issue.

NEWS IN BRIEF

THE CHASE was dropped from the BBC's 50th Anniversary celebrations in favour of a few minutes of excerpts shown at 9 15pm on Saturday November 1 and introduced by closet-fans, pop stars Cliff Richard and Ringo Starr (the latter of whom ironically appeared in THE CHASE as a Beatle in episode 1 !). DOCTOR WHO and the Daleks would have been ideal material for the BBC but presumably it was deemed there would have been some confusion amongst the general audience with the Doctor currently only halfway through his present-day trial.

BBC VIDEO *are holding back the next DOCTOR WHO release until May and the title has been confirmed as DEATH TO THE DALEKS.*

THE KING'S DEMONS director Tony Virgo will step into the shoes of Julia (SMUGGLERS / UNDERWATER MENACE) Smith when she steps down as producer of the top-rated EastEnders at the end of the year.

OCTOBER 20TH *saw the presscall for Bonnie Langford as Melanie and the story made all the national papers—including the front pages of The London Standard and The Daily Express. She also appeared on a recent Wogan but seemed more interested in talking about her stage role as Peter Pan.*

THE BRADFORD PLAYHOUSE recently played host to a special screening of Troughton/Pertwee episodes as a reflection of the developing art of programme making.

JON PERTWEE *is reportedly ill with a mysterious virus he brought back with him from New Zealand where he had been filming a new series of Worzel Gummidge.*

PATRICK TROUGHTON is currently appearing alongside Nicholas (Del Boy) Lyndhurst in a new LWT sit -com called The Two Of Us on Friday nights.

TOM BAKER *and Brian Blessed have been appearing in sketches in the new Kenny Everett series.*

W.H. ALLEN have unveiled the cover of the forthcoming book THE AMBASSADORS OF DEATH which features the promised portrait of Jon Pertwee and two atronauts . When released in 1987 it will complete the Pertwee adaptions. (PRINTED IN FULL COLOUR NEXT ISSUE)

LATE RATINGS FIGURE: *TRIAL OF A TIME LORD 6-Approximately 4·7m. (MORE RATINGS NEXT ISSUE)*

JN-T Booksign Snub

THE RECENT BOOK-SIGNING SESSION AT THE FORBIDDEN PLANET 2 BOOK SHOP IN LONDON HELD TO PROMOTE JOHN NATHAN-TURNER'S NEW BOOK, THE COMPANIONS, TURNED OUT TO BE A FLOP WITH WELL UNDER 50 FANS QUEUEING TO GET THEIR COPIES SIGNED BY THE DWINDLING CELEBRITY—A FAR CRY FROM WHEN IN HIS HEYDEY AS PRODUCER OF DOCTOR WHO 200 FANS TURNED UP FOR THE SIGNING OF HIS FIRST BOOK: THE TARDIS INSIDE OUT.

Billed to run from 1-2pm, it didn't take more than ten minutes before the bulk of the queue had come and gone and JN-T was heard to say, *"What a shame it's petered down so quickly"*. As the Forbidden Planet staff began shipping the boxes of unsold copies back down to their basement, we asked a spokesman how they were going to get rid of the vast quantities of unsold books: *"Don't even talk about it—it's been a disaster!"*, he said. Fortunately we learned they were on sale or return and that apparently JN-T had taken a pile of the signed copies which he plans to distribute as gifts among friends and relatives, but this didn't prevent the signing from being by far the worst attended that any of the Forbidden Planet staff we asked could recall.

However, on the positive side this did provide a unique opportunity for DWB reporter Tim Collins—posing as a normal fan of course—to spend ample time quizzing JN-T about his time on the show. We asked him why he thought the Season 23 ratings had been disastrous: *"The reason the ratings were so poor is because we've had such good weather ...I had to set the busser on my cooker myself the last few weeks in order to come in from the garden. When the clocks go back the ratings will improve"*. But did he see this as affecting the chances for a Season 24? *"No, the chances are still rather good"*, he replied. We put it to John that might it not have been a better idea had the stories this season been individually titled rather than given the overall umbrella title of THE TRIAL OF A TIME LORD so as to alert viewers that a 'new' story was starting in case they wanted to start again ? *"No, because we made it very clear in our releases to the press that it[MINDWARP]was a new story starting"*.

And finally , with DOCTOR WHO almost behind him, what are John's future projects ? *" I can't talk about those—they're top secret !!"*.

UNFORTUNATELY WE ARE UNABLE TO BRING YOU THIS MONTH'S LETTER FROM AMERICA BECAUSE, AHEM, IT HAS BEEN HELD UP IN THE POST SOMEWHERE BETWEEN OHIO AND HARROW-WEALD !

However, instead, Kathleen Toth has provided us with some very interesting pictures of the two Bakers on tour together with the Spirit of Light organisation. Word has it (and as you can probably tell from their faces at the signing below) that they don't get on very famously together and Colin Baker reportedly refuses to appear on the same panel as Tom because the original Baker always steal the limelight ! I'm sure Kathleen will bring us up to date on the gossip next issue, but meanwhile, for a change , convention photos from the other side of the Atlantic. . .



(BELOW: Bonnie Langford takes to the stage for the her first American convention last May in Wisconsin at "Who-Vent '86" with JN-T)





TRIAL OF A TIME LORD?

PARTS 5-8 REVIEWED

"We HAD to act", snapped Lynda Bellingham's Inquisitor in episode 8 of TRIAL OF A TIME LORD, bringing a sigh of relief to fans across the country. After the previous three episodes, someone had to escape from the somnambulism of the rest of the cast of 'Mindwarp'. Actors are traditionally in the firing line because, in the world of naturalistic drama on television, they are the central attention of the viewer. In a show with a budget like DOCTOR WHO they can carry a poor story. Yet with its array of impressive acting talent, the programme failed to take off. I hardly recognised the Gordon Warnecke of My Beautiful Launderette in the bemused performance he gave as Tuza; Patrick Ryecart's studiously exaggerated portrayal of a restrainedly loony scientist made me wonder if I'd dreamed his lead performance in the BBC's Romeo and Juliet; and Brian Blessed struggled to overcome his Brian Blessed impersonation. Nabil Shaban seemed only to go through the motions as Sil and Christopher Ryan gargled back as Kiv. These people are competent actors, as demonstrated by their work elsewhere, and my disappointment must therefore stem from the material they were required to use .

It has to be admitted that the storyline is a letdown. If one tries to summarise any of the best DOCTOR WHO storylines of the past, it requires a lengthy paragraph because it isn't possible to delineate the plot without particular reference to subplots and characterisations. 'Mindwarp' provides no such difficulties because, as with the rest of the season, it is subordinated to the needs of the overall framework of the series; the Valeyard's attempts to prove that a particular danger has arisen from the Doctor's mere presence on Thoros Beta. The result is that there is no credible background for the story.

Producer John Nathan-Turner's era invites comparison with earlier stories because of its explicit or implicit reworkings of the show's history as structuring elements of its own. This is demonstrated most clearly in a story like LOGOPOLIS or EARTHSHOCK where a knowledge of the Doctor's fictional past illuminates a narrative which can also stand on its own for the less well-informed viewer. It is least successful in stories like ATTACK OF THE CYBERMEN or WARRIORS OF THE DEEP where in reference is essential and the plot structured around such knowledge. 'Mindwarp' veers towards the latter category, not only in its requirement that you have seen 'Mysterious Planet', but also VENGEANCE ON VAROS. Additionally it opens itself up to unfavourable comparison with earlier stories: Kiv's alien approach to business recalls THE SUNMAKERS, for example, except that it is not so well integrated into the story as a whole. There are other irritations based on irritations about consistency: Sil's happiness in the unhapiness of others was a central theme of VAROS, but here seems like tokenism, and his voice translator seems to have made a startling, if unexplained recovery . And I was confused by the arrival of Kiv's business contact because of the inexplicable visual similarity it bore to a purple-faced Terileptil ! Compare this throwaway reference, for example, to the more successful re-use of the EARTHSHOCK helmets in 'Mysterious Planet' where the alert afficionado would realise that they indicated Earth in the far future. (Arguably, however, the afficionado will already know the plot details because DWB will have spilled the beans, but that's another problem).

I think, then, that the lack of depth in so many of the characterisations is because Philip Martin and Ron Jones have failed to create a believable society. The power of Yracanos, manifested in Brian Blessed's huge televisual presence, is thus undercut by our inability to visualise him at the head of an unseen army. Robert Holmes and Graeme Harper made us believe that a world really did depend on Morgus' decisions in CAVES OF ANDROZANI, but there is no unseen population we can conceive of in 'Mindwarp'. This is despite attempts go give shape to Yracanos' personality by taking time out to muse about the afterlife, his powers of leadership and his plans for marrying. Such scenes however, far from punctuating a racy narrative with moments of reflective non-narrative, instead hold up an already flagging storyline. With such an absence of narrative depth, the voiced threat that all future life in the Universe is endangered by Crozier's work becomes hugely melodramatic. At the one moment where we might be concerned for the effects of the work, namely the convincing transmogrification of the character we have known for many weeks, the whole emphasis of the end of Peri's role in the series is thrown onto the Doctor and his trial. So long and thanks for all the fish, as Kiv might say.

But it is unfair to assess the story finally before evaluating its contribution to the 14-part story as a whole ? We know that scripts commissioned for the original season were dropped because because they didn't fit the format, having been accepted as individual 4-parters . A claim that the story is melodramatic could perhaps be qualified thus: the Valeyard, for reasons as yet undisclosed (one presumes) is attempting to convict the Doctor with very dubious evidence, and we haven't yet heard the defence evidence. So inconsistencies such as accusations that the Doctor has interfered despite the Time Lords' previous use of him in just such a capacity are glossed over. However, a convincing

>12

EDITORIAL

DWB 40 NOVEMBER'86

It is very difficult to know quite where to start with an announcement that will disppoint many—whilst delighting a few—readers, but after 40 issues, umpteen sheets of letraset and bottles of correction fluid, DWB is calling it a day, at least for the time being. A variety of factors have come together that have made me decide it would be logical to wind-up the fanzine naturally for the next 6 months, but I must stress this is a solely internal decision and is in no way inflicted from outside pressures.

So what are the reasons ? The main reason has to be that after 40 non-stop months of editing the most popular DOCTOR WHO fanzine ever it has become a bit of a routine and quite frankly one I am desperately keen to break out of for a few months. This would also be beneficial for the magazine as a long break might provide a new lease of life for it. I think this is a safer attitude to adopt than to continue churning DWB out non-stop month after month with the risk of it becoming stale. However, I would be interested to hear from anyone who might be interested and think they would be capable of producing DWB in my absence (I am going off on a working holiday to Australia, incidentally). If so please drop a line listing the qualities you think you possess to successfully produce DWB from February through May as soon as possible.

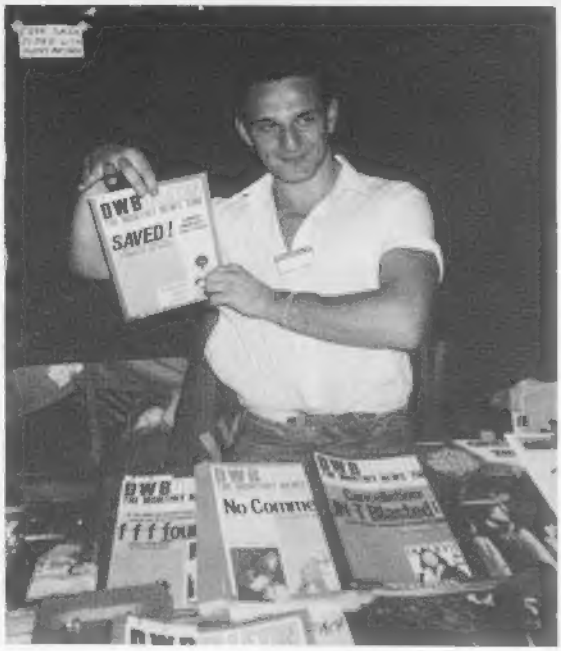
Another reason is that, at last, the immediate future of the show is secure and there WILL be a Season 24. Hopefully, if Michael Grade as has been suggested really does care for the show, then he will put a lot of thought in the casting of the new producer and script-editor and, who knows, maybe this will be the beginning of a new horizon for the series as when Barry Letts revitalised the show way back at the beginning of the '70s. If so then there can be little doubt that the success this would bring the series would guarantee many more seasons of DOCTOR WHO! So DWB can at last take a rest safe in the knowledge that there will be a show to cover on its return, and with a new - look DOCTOR WHO you can be sure that DWB too will change in line with the new direction which means an exciting future ahead of us all round ! By next issue we should be able to confirm the important new appointments and maybe even studio dates and directors for the next series. Talking of next issue, PLEASE order it as soon as possible to enable us to clear our backlog of correspondence before we close down (if any orders are received after the first week in January, chances are you won't receive your Winter and Spring Special until late May !). The issue itself will have 4 colour pages as opposed to the usual eight (well, the theme is the black and white years) but there is a dire shortage of original material left from the Hartnell and Troughton era in colour that DWB hasn't used and also this will allow for more text and the probability of extra pages. Also, the prohibitively expensive printing costs for colour—which have resulted in the last two Specials both going vastly over budget—would mean we would have to raise the cover price of DWB quite considerably to cover our costs. However, hopefully the Winter Special will break even at the end of the day.

When ordering the Special (details on page 15), to avoid missing the comeback issue of DWB (which should be dated June) you can order it at the same time as the Winter / Spring Special by enclosing an extra £1. Indeed, no prior notice—except for a probable advert in CT—will be given as to its release so I'd recommend you order it now to avoid missing it then. People who have already subscribed up to February 1987 will receive the June issue as the last of their subscription copies

Talking of CT ads, a lot of people have been writing in objecting to the fact that we are giving away free issues to new readers when they had to fork out hard-earned money for those same issues. To put your minds at rest, the 'samples' we give away are shop-soiled copies which are unsuitable for selling. No new DWB's are sent out free to prospective subscribers !

Finally this month, as well as the Dalek Omnibus' we have available at a special discount rate (see advert last issue), a few copies of the acclaimed US DOCTOR WHO 'zine—edited by ex - DWAS executive member John Peel — have come our way. They sell in the sci-fi shops at around £4 but we're giving them away at £1 each (inc' P+P). We have four different - issues including a Jon Pertwee Special and one on Dalek merchandise

I'm sorry if this month's column seems unrehearsed and waffley but I didn't realise I would have so much spare room left this issue hence the gratuitour pic (right) and the fact that my rep from the printers is due to call any moment now— Byeee (GARY)



This issue...

Cover: GRADE 3, JN-T 1 !

2-3: NEWS

4: EDITORIAL / WHOTOON CLASSICS

5: COMMENT: Has DWM really gone from such a well-presented and articulate read to completely the opposite in such a short time as some fans suggest? We investigate...

6-7: LETTERS; Including a confession from the 'sick' fan...

8-10: COLIN BAKER SPEAKS OUT ; Part 2 of our revealing interview with the latest incumbent of the Tardis...

11: STUDIO REPORT: TRIAL OF A TIME LORD parts 9-12

12-13: REVIEW / YOUR VIEWS / STAR RATINGS; TRIAL OF A TIME LORD (parts 5-8)

14: ANALYSIS: A look at the continual change in scheduling of DOCTOR WHO in recent years and how it has ultimately affected the stability of the show itself...

15: WINTER / SPRING SPECIAL '87 PREVIEW; A sneak look at just some of the goodies NOT to be missed next issue...



How will Bonnie Langford shape up? Will she be Violet Elizabeth # 2, or will we all be forced to eat a piece of humble pie? . . .

CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE: Peter Anghelides(12,14), Colin Baker (8-10), Tim Collins(2 , 8 - 10), John Jeffrey(5), Steve Pugsley (11), Richard Starkings (4), Kathleen Toth(3).

DWB IS A STRICTLY NON-COMMERCIAL VENTURE, PRODUCED BY THE FANS, FOR THE FANS.

VOL.4,NO.4. PUBLISHED FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH 1986. EDITED & PUBLISHED BY GARY LEVY TO WHOM ALL MATERIAL IS COPYRIGHT UNLESS CREDITED ABOVE . THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE SOLELY OF THE WRITERS AND ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE INDICATIVE OF EDITORIAL POLICY OR FANDOM AS A WHOLE. NO ATTEMPT IS MADE TO SUPERSEDE B B C, MARVEL OR W.H. ALLEN COPYRIGHTS. DWB IS PRINTED BY 'DESIGN & PRINT'(WEST SUSSEX)LTD', (0273) 455221 .

WHOTOON CLASSICS


ROMANA! megios IS NEAR!
HOW CAN YOU TELL? - EXTRA SENSORY PERCEPTION?
SORT OF. YOU SEE, I HAVE THIS PRICKLY FEELING ALL OVER...
1984
THEY ASKED ME TO STAY ON YOU KNOW - BE A DECIDER...
YOU?! A DECIDER?
YES..
from FULL CIRCLE #4
I DECIDED NOT TO...!
1984

DWM in Decay ?

PLEASE NOTE: THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS ARTICLE ARE THOSE SOLELY OF THE WRITER AND ARE IN NO WAY INTENDED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE READERSHIP OF THE 'DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE'.

As DWB disappears into the sunset for the next 6 months, what better time to evaluate the merits/deficiencies of the other publications DWB's readers will have to turn to for their 'WHO news ? CT's approach to 'WHO journalism has of course been well documented in these pages, but with John Nathan-Turner's impending departure hopefully it will become more of a free press, though it can never become fully independant whilst remaining in the eyes of the BBC. However, present editor Neil Hutchings has demonstrated, through head-lines such as "Carry on Doctor" and his inclusion of press coverage towards the infamous Starburst interview (even though he editorially attacked the latter) , that even CT is now prepared to incur the wrath of "His Holiness" and the Corporation.

Perhaps less optimistic, however, is the future for the Marvel DOCTOR WHO Magazine which first appeared in October 1979 and has recently undergone numerous editorial and format changes, vainly seeking to recapture the ideal balance it achieved and adhered to in Jeremy Bentham's heyday at the helm as features editor (circa #s 50-70).

The DOCTOR WHO Magazine is, first and foremost, a commercial enterprise. It isn't so much in the business to cater for the needs of DOCTOR WHO aficionados, rather than to 'procure' money from the pockets of those same people. This it does with a balance of items published monthly in the form of a magazine which are presumably what the readers want. But do they ? A favourite pastime in fandom nowadays would appear to be discussing the apparent ineptitude of Marvel in fulfilling this very function.

With the show's permanent cancellation seemingly imminent — be it after Season 23 or 24* — Marvel will subsequently drop the magazine, perhaps not as quickly as it did the Blakes 7 Monthly taking the former's household status and durability into account, but nevertheless the inevitable decline in readership as a result will force Marvel to latch on to another popular but 'living' idea which has great commercial potential. Judging by the shape of the magazine at present, this may not be an altogether lamentable demise, however. . . (*WRITTEN BEFORE MICHAEL GRADE'S LETTER TO 'CT')

I personally ceased buying the magazine at the end of Cefn Ridout's tenure when it became obvious that incoming editor Sheila Cranna would do little do elevate its status back above juvenile level. In fact, in my opinion it got worse ! I'll therefore have to take the latest available issue (#118) to illustrate what I mean, but alas things don't appear to have improved and I find a magazine as slipshodedly put together as its TV counterpart. We begin, where else, but with the cover, and yet another standard Colin-Baker-in-costume-smiling-at-camera shot (yawwwwn !). This aside, did Marvel really have to select a photo also depicting Colin's digital Timex ? We know he's a Time Lord, but. . .

Overleaf, a contents page which demonstrates all too vividly the bland and innapropriate style of presentation that has plagued the magazine since the departure of the imaginative layouts of Rahid Khan. But to Steve Cook's credit the liberal splattering of diamonds and oversized headings has been reduced now that Jane Hindmarsh has gone and admittedly the quality of the paper (strange how council loo paper springs to mind as a comparison) doesn't show the present layouts off to their best effect. The colour photos, too — one of the magazines assets both in novelty and variety — are cheapened by the coarse and grainy reproduction, a far cry from the high quality glossiness of old.

Flicking as quickly as possible past the unceasingly cringe-inducing and sycophantically edited letters pages (*"So enjoyable was the issue that even the Letters page was of interest"* — ref : the opening letter on page 4 discussing #115), and the now clapped out DOCTOR WHO ? strip, and we arrive at the first interview of the issue which is actually a very good read for a change , helped by the fact that Anthony Read hasn't been interviewed on his time with the series and has some very interesting and orginal things to say. Interviews with Troughton, Courtney, etc, are all very good , but let's face it they're well and truly drained of new facts and anecdotes and now it is the turn of the backroom boys of 'WHO to entertain us with their reminiscences.

Past the Gallifrey Guardian (which really ought to be retitled 'The Gallifrey Historian') and the claim that THE CHASE features *"...a young Martin Jarvis in one of his earliest screen appearances..."* (ho, ho) and the once absorbing highlight of the magazine The Matrix Data Bank (where you *didn't* have to double check the solutions given to readers' queries to ensure they were feasible), and we come to the Archives which, since taken over by Richard Marson, acts as little more than superfluous padding , especially if you subscribe to the CMS releases from which much of the material from the earlier stories appear to be culled , and the rest of which is at times grossly inaccurate. This issue for example the less knowledgeable of readers will learn that Stephen Thorne *"...was later to play the giant robot in Tom Baker's debut story."* ! The mind boggles at Marson's acclaimed grasp (or rather lack of) 'WHO lore, or is it just a blatant disregard for accuracy which, if so, isn't treating the readers with much respect. But even this wouldn't matter so much if Marson actually seemed to *care* about what he was writing, instead of giving the impression of churning out as much waffle as possible. I find many of his articles to be hackneyed, and certainly the allegation that he submitted an interview with William(Ian)Russell to Marvel a few months ago — which reportedly turned out to be no more than a string of quotes the star had already given in *previous* interviews to various publications, allegedly mostly fanzines — is little more than scandalous, especially as it was billed as giving every impression of being 'exclusive', as indeed it now seems it may not have been after all (and it is also rumoured that there may have been *other* less than 'exclusive' interviews submitted to Marvel in the past by Marson and subsequently used too !).

However, the Colin Baker interview seems genuine enough , even if it does tread the same old ground and with some of the questions (sent in by the readers) so teeth-grindingly banal as to render them utterly useless to even the most casual of readers, but let's face it the average DOCTOR WHO Magazine reader would *have* to be fanatical to bother reading it in the first place ?!

Now, Gary Russell is a writer who's not afraid to speak his mind but oh dear, Gary, correct me if I'm wrong but did you *really* say those awfully nice things about JN-T's new book (just as you said way back in #88 that *"WARRIORS OF THE DEEP was a 'flawless' story"*) ? *"For now"*, Gary says , *"no one seems quite sure what sort of book John might do next..."*. Well, as the world awaits this almighty decision, might I suggest he base his next 'masterpiece' on something more substantial than this feeble last minute cash-in which will doubtlessly sell well simply because there will always be people prepared to fork out extortionate sums of money for *anything* with the DOCTOR WHO logo slapped on the front cover, regardless of its actual merits. We really are a gullible breed...

DWB and CT have often been accused of revealing too much information in story previews, but none come as blatant as that overtly revealing piece on TRIAL OF A TIME LORD episodes 9-14 !

I've always disliked the comic strip intensely, treating it as 8 pages (a fifth of the magazine) of padding every month. The present artist John Ridgeway does seem to lack the flair of most of his predecessors — notably the excellent Dave Gibbons — in capturing the likenesses or characterisations of either the Doctor or Peri, and at times the artwork is ghastly and the story itself — or the first part of 'The Changes' at least — can hardly be described as being even remotely original.

Next we come to yet another in a long line of tedious companion chronologies, or just another excuse for more tedious waffle from Richard Marson, again displaying his disregard for accuracy, this time in his opening paragraph by stating factually that the Doctor and Susan were related. Of course this has never been confirmed as being the case but Marson seems to think that writing for Marvel is qualification enough to rewrite accepted 'WHO lore even though the chances of Susan being genetically related to the Doctor have been documented on numerous occsions — even by Sydney Newman himself — as odds against ! And when you have managed to wade through the rest of the superficial 'candyfloss' you will probably come to the same conclusion that what information there is concerning Susan is so sparse and sporadic that far from serving as a definitive character assessment it actually renders a whole page useless !

And as if to show they really are stuck for innovative ideas , next it's the 'let's-rewrite-the-article-that-looks-at-the-success-of-the-Daleks' routine, complete with the proverbial 'boob'. As you probably already know, the Daleks failed to take off in America because the films weren't promoted properly and thus flopped. So WHY does 'Philip Dickson'(?) factually state that Nation intended to market the Daleks in America *because* of the "popularity" of the Dalek films there ? This article would serve well as a general article in, say, a Sunday supplement magazine , but in a supposedly specialized periodical it is yet another 4 pages of total padding going over already well-trodden ground.

But, to the best part of this issue, the end ! Well, those are my own personal views on the current state of the magazine , and you probably get the distinct impression by now that I'm not too fond of it, despite having been addicted to it in its heyday. The faults of the magazine — which are totally my own opinion — may be numerous but they *can* easily be rectified with a bit of care and attention to detail. Most importantly, I feel, the writers must concentrate primarily on 'quality' rather than 'quantity' and the editor should be well enough equipped on the actual subject matter (ie, DOCTOR WHO) to be able to eradicate blatant errors at proofing stage and not treat the magazine, as I see it, as though its readers also subscribe to 'Pippin' and 'Toyland' as most of the readers, surely, are above kindergarten age ? Also, it would be beneficial for the magazine to have an editor as knoweledgable on the subject matter as its readers to create a better feeling of understanding between the magazine and the readers and thus making it easier to tap out new and invigorating ideas which the magazine so desperately needs, in my opinion-*JOHN JEFFREY*

Letters

D.W.B.,
5 Whitegate Gardens,
Harrow-Weald,
Middlesex HA3 6BW.

THE RIGHT OF REPLY

STEVE PUGSLEY, Reading, BERKS

Although there are parts of DWB's review of Phoenix Association's CyberCon with which I take issue, it is with deep regret that I admit that many of the criticisms are indeed valid. In commenting on some of the criticisms, I hope that what follows is not interpreted as a bland justification of our efforts, but as part of the process of self-analysis and evaluation we are currently undergoing, besides being of interest to those who wish to know more about what happens behind the scenes...

After the success of PanoptiCon VI and the triumph of the Genesis Convention, we thought we had it made. The overwhelming praise we received as a result of the latter event may well have made us complacent and led us to underestimate the considerable problems CyberCon would bring. However, it was only the experience of the team that enabled us to survive the incredible number of crises that developed before and during the event.

We consider ourselves exceptionally unlucky that our giant Barco screen failed to work properly on the Saturday morning since we had successfully tested it five minutes before admitting entrants. However, Andrew James and his team were able to repair and familiarise themselves with the equipment during the Saturday lunch break so that everything worked perfectly the rest of the weekend.

It was heartbreaking watching our list of confirmed guests disintegrate in the weeks leading up to CyberCon, culminating in Deborah Watling's withdrawal with only three days to go. I have been unable to confirm rumours that a troublemaker was ringing around our guests and putting them off. However, although we lost many to work or holiday commitments or invitations to America, we were very fortunate to book in Janet Fielding and Nicola Bryant immediately before the event.

A couple of key and valuable members of the team let us down badly at the beginning of the event, leaving us slightly understaffed. Our remaining stewards worked bloody hard and did a fantastic job in holding things together despite less than ten hours sleep over three nights and working in what were often very trying conditions.

As to your reviewer's assertion that CyberCon was a "semi-disaster", come off it Gary—CyberCon was a success!

FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE AT CYBERCON

DAVID GIBBS, Beverley, E.YORKSHIRE

As one who attended the CyberCon in Manchester last August, I was disappointed to read the review in #38. Personally I found the event to be extremely enjoyable, and whilst the organisation wasn't up to the professional standards of PanoptiCon, the whole weekend had a very friendly atmosphere. *Phoenix Promotions have decided to have a go at redeeming their previous untarnished reputation by throwing a Christmas convention in Hammersmith, London (registration details on back page...).*

'SICK FAN' CONFESSES

ROBERT HILL, Solihull, WEST MIDS

Having read your news item headed 'Sick Fan Exposed', I have been shamed into writing, and since you revealed my location and that fan line-up which depicts myself (I'm the fat one with arms crossed on page 11 of DWB#35) you give me little choice. At least other fans in my area won't have to share suspicion so at least credit me for that. I found your labelling of my behaviour as 'sick', 'warped' and 'perverted' grossly insulting and unnecessary. I only made those phone calls for a bit of fun as I was at a loose end and I didn't mean half of those so-called 'malicious' things I said. To show I am willing to make up for it, I am prepared to reimburse the cost to anyone who paid to go ex-directory as a result. My address is: 132 Clinton Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Mids B90 4RQ. Now, you can't say fairer than that, can you?

Incidentally, I thought I'd better put you and your readers out of your miseries by informing you that John Eller (see DWB #s 26-27 Letters page) doesn't exist. It was me all along! Sorry.

"COLIN BAKER CANNOT ACT"

NICK STANTON, NORTHANTS

Number 38 was a rather mixed bag, wasn't it? The Nabil Shaban interview revealed a very courageous, determined and angry human being and was probably the best DWB has ever carried, but the news pages and letters were some of the most muddle-headed and provocative yet.

To begin with the front page; in my issue of Starburst at least, Eric Saward didn't vindicate DWB—indeed he didn't mention DWB at all. I do not imagine that Eric Saward would vindicate the 'demon script-editor' tag you slapped on him a few issues back. One might wonder, indeed, what the DWB stance is, since the Editorial in #35 hardly makes it clear why DWB has turned against JN-T, other than because you badly misjudged the mood of Fandom 18 months ago in supporting him and have now swung round. Your 'campaign' against JN-T seems to be centred on three areas of policy: 1) His casting of comedians or comic actors (ignoring the fact, for example, Nerys Hughes and Alexei Sayle were very good and that previous Producers have cast such noted comedians as Bernard Bresslaw, Jon Pertwee and John Cleese); 2) His decision not to use Michael E.Briant and Christopher Barry (although the paltry 16 votes they managed to attract in the last DWB poll makes one wonder how much fans have missed them); 3) Excessive use of continuity. Well, I'd have gone along with these two years ago, I cannot help thinking that in jumping on the anti-JN-T bandwagon you have badly misinterpreted the case of those fans, like myself, who think that JN-T is 'burnt out' and should be replaced—and thought so *before* the cancellation.

You ignore, for example, Eric Saward's main grievance that no quality writers (eg. Glenn Chandler, Roger Parkes, Chris Boucher, Jeremy Paul and Don Webb) are used on the programme. You ignore, most blatantly of all, the casting of Colin Baker as the Doctor. Indeed, DWB has censored all criticism of Colin Baker—in Antony Howe's article and in the Saward interview in Starburst. Well, here's something else you can censor—COLIN BAKER CANNOT ACT! I defy anyone to watch, for example, the opening scene in the Tardis in TIMELASH or the whole of THE TWO DOCTORS and then tell me that he can—and no, the first 3 episodes of TRIAL have not made me change my mind but merely made me more resolute. It seems to me that people point to two Colin Baker performances as outstanding; his episode of Blakes 7 and THE TWIN DILEMMA. In both, Colin Baker turns in hammy, OTT performances. These have turned out to be not his finely-tuned response to a hammy and OTT script, but his *only* acting-style which does not include any room for subtlety (after seeing Brian Blessed in the RSC's recent Hamlet I'd level the same charge at him—how odd that JN-T didn't want him for MINDWARP).

It would be a mistake, I think, to go overboard about the Saward interview since it leaves many unasked questions, e.g. "Why didn't you leave earlier?", and "If RESURRECTION is so bad why did you write it?", and "Couldn't you have come up with something a little more original than the trial concept?". And isn't it interesting that people are rushing to his defence when the reason he left was because JN-T *didn't* want to kill the Doctor off?

I mentioned the letters earlier — there are three that stand out for comment, the first being Gary Cleaver's: if you either hate or love JN-T then *why* has he got merely "mixed feelings" ?! Secondly, I question Paul Stamper's letter: just because Robert Holmes is dead doesn't mean that everything written about him has to praise him to the skies. If Guy Clapperton wants to criticise THE KROTONS and THE TWO DOCTORS then fair enough—Holmes was a professional writer and I'm sure he'd have respected professional criticism of the kind that Clapperton wrote—what's more disturbing is that you should have tampered with it. Finally, I can assure Gary Jones that while PYRAMIDS OF MARS is vastly overrated, most of the acknowledged classics ARE as good as people say they are.

Usually when DWB readers write you a critical letter they end by saying "Don't suppose you'll publish this" which is a guarantee that you will in order for your loyal supporters to write in and defend you. Well, you can publish this letter or not—just so long as you consider it.

I'll doubtless continue to buy the Bulletin every month for the same reason that I tune in every week to the programme—out of fascinated dread of its awfulness and appreciation of the rare flashes of brilliance.

By saying what he did, Saward justified everything DWB has ever been criticised for printing concerning JN-T. In other words our 'anti-JN-T stance' has proved to be valid, or in one word 'vindicated', or do you need a dictionary to look that one up in, Nick?

As for protecting Colin Baker from criticism over his portrayal of the Doctor, admittedly during his first season whilst he was finding his feet in the role we felt it would be unconstructive to start denouncing his portrayal. However, since then we have published many letters and references voicing disapproval about his interpretation and DWB even made its own thoughts known on Colin Baker's poor performance in parts 1-4 of TRIAL last issue.

"NEW PHASE"

DAVID MASON, Chelmsford, ESSEX

Congratulations on #38 of your magnificent fanzine. I was particularly impressed by the Nabil Shaban interview which gave us an insight into the sheer determination of the man who brings Sil to our screens so effectively.

I'm not sure what to expect from 'The Ultimate Foe' at the moment. A race of half man / half tulip monsters sounds a bit too close to moving plastic trees in MARK OF THE RANI that made me cringe so much. And did everyone see Bonnie Langford on Blue Peter the other week? She referred to

DOCTOR WHO as being in a "new phase"? It makes me sick that any increase in popularity of the show should be attributed to Michael Grade's revamping. As far as I can see we are not getting anything different due to the cancellation except 12 weeks less of the programme we all enjoy so much. If you enjoy Season 23, please give your praise to the casts and production teams involved – NOT to the man who has kept us waiting an extra 8 months for it !

TREMENDOUS EXPERIENCE

DANIEL BLYTHE, Smarden, KENT

After an 18-month wait with no DOCTOR WHO at all (some of us can't afford videos), it was a tremendous experience when the first episode of Season 23 burst onto the screen. The story developed into a most enjoyable one; very atmospheric and well-scripted (despite the cliffhangers). So I was shocked to read your review which gave the story only 38% – about half of what you awarded the vastly inferior Season 22 stories on average !

Shattering the near-magical illusion created by Holmes' script, Glynn's music and Mallett's direction, you ripped apart everything but the opening special effects. One and a half stars for direction ! And last year you were awarding more to the unimaginative Pennant Roberts ! And so what if Tony Selby was sending up his character ? The approach *worked*.

I have to say that, until now, my views on JN-T have corresponded with yours, but despite his terrible failings he produces the occasional shining story (admittedly more by luck than judgement) and this was such a story. Did you *really* believe all that you wrote or was it another attempt to be controversial ?

And it seems to me that if Michael Grade wants to axe the programme, the opinions of hard-to-please reviewers like yourself will only help him. He could still make the naive but plausible assumption that the fans don't care for the programme either anymore and that the show has reached its nadir. Will you savage the super MINDWARP in the same way ?

On the contrary Daniel, if I had lied through my teeth and praised the opening 4 episodes like many of the correspondents to Points Of View, The Radio Times letters pages and Oracle's B.S.V.P. teletext page, this could supply Grade with more fuel to axe the show. As well as the low ratings, the decline in the audience for each subsequent episode show that this story was very unpopular with the general public, yet if the fans continue to acclaim it, and blindly too in my opinion, Grade could easily axe it on the grounds that it is only enjoyed by the tiniest minority of viewers. Conversely, for the fans to admit it was poor would probably credit us with some intelligence in Grade's mind.

BBC TO BLAME

DAVID GRYC, Sittingbourne, KENT

I'm not surprised by the viewing figures for part 1 of TRIAL OF A TIME LORD. The fault lies entirely with the BBC. How can anyone be expected to remember a particular show when it's been off the air for 18 months ! Kids just don't sit idly waiting for 'that' programme to come back and the coverage for the return was very weak. I didn't expect it to grace the cover of the Radio Times, but it might have helped – better surely than relegated to the children's pages. Also we are still in the autumn when some still have better things to do on Saturday afternoons than watch TV. Let's face it, the whole thing was badly advertised. I saw 2 different previews twice and these were not after 7pm on any day leading up to part 1. Everything was in fact assumed: 8 million viewers for the first episode after 18 months. Pah ! If it's cancelled for this reason alone it will be very petty-minded indeed.

SHOCKING VIEWING FIGURES

STEVEN GRACE, SURREY

I was shocked at the viewing figures, but they were slightly improved by the fact that Roland Rat only got 3·5 million, and he's a mega-star ! Also, the figures do go up towards the winter and September is, afterall, still very light, so perhaps there will be a dramatic increase with later episodes...

I would like to congratulate you on the first part of your Colin Baker interview. I thought there was nothing more to learn after PanoptiCon VII but you have proved me wrong. Well done !!

EVERYONE'S JUMPING ON THE BANDWAGON

NEIL HUNTER, Vicars Cross, CHESTER

I am still wondering about the possibility of a Season 24 that has no reference, gratuitous or otherwise, to any aspect of the show's past. Returning monsters and so on are all very well, but when we come to expect them all of the illusion just vanishes. I'll never forget the impact of JN-T's EARTHSHOCK with full force and effect. Why has such an impression never been made since? We are all informed in advance of the return of such characters as Glitz which I think would have benefitted from the conspiracy of silence (even DWM let us know about that one). "The Mysterious DOCTOR WHO" is also no longer anything of the sort: all we are treated to is clowning and funny expressions and, worst of all, we know full well that Colin Baker can do a *lot* better than that !

Eric Saward came up with some startling and disturbing facts about JN-T and I'm surprised that the man himself (Chicago, OK !) has been able to hold his head up in public since. It set the record straight but at what cost ? Obviously Saward had more than enough of JN-T over the years, but *why* didn't he stand up to the guy ? Davison's abrupt announcement of his departure in 1983 now takes a completely different standing following these revelations. I was surprised at Saward being the author of the dreadful ATTACK – even Robert Holmes didn't suffer contractual problems with his many stories.

Next, of course, we have the pleasure of viewing that most dubious piece of casting yet in the form of Bonnie Langford. She recently appeared on Radio 4's The Day I Was Born and seemed as ignorant about the ethos of DOCTOR WHO as Joe Ignorant himself. All she could really say throughout a repetitious session was the now cliched, "*It was a lot of fun*", and little else.

JNT'S OVER-INFLATED EGO CAUSED CANCELLATION

BEN KEYWOOD, Worksop, NOTTS

I was very surprised to read in #39 the letter from US fan Sean Burke condemning my own letter in #34. "*I found it very insulting...to read letters like Ben Keywood's saying how JN-T is undermining DR WHO and wasting his time by coming to America to promote the show...*" is not what I said.

JN-T has shown an EXTREME amount of pandering towards the US fans. I do not object to him promoting the show in your country, Mr.Burke, but I do object when the US gets promotion and the UK doesn't. Your comment: "*...it is his responsibility to promote the show to the American fans as well as the British*", is very true, but surely not INSTEAD of the British ? JN-T's pandering to the US fans has become so extreme that even the show itself has come second place to promoting HIMSELF in America, where he knows fans will whoop and scream and idolize him. It is *because* of this selfish attitude that the state of DOCTOR WHO in Britain is as it is today. His ego has become so over-inflated that he spends all of his time either in America or arranging events in America to the cost of the production of the show itself.

I very rarely agree with anyone in the DWAS exec., but for once Dominic May was right in his letter to Television Today. Mr.Saward's "exposures" may have been true but for God's sake he was AN INCOMPETENT SCRIPT EDITOR and by his accusations he is only trying to hide his own mistakes which he knows are equally as severe and numerous as Nathan-Turner's. He knows how much the fans have turned against JN-T and is cashing in on the opportunity to put all the blame onto him. A good script editor can bring out something that sparkles out of even the poorest of scripts: the stories claimed to be the worst of JN-T's failures (THE TWIN DILEMMA and TIMELASH) were completely rewritten by Saward and the dialogue was pure silliness. ALL last season's stories suffered under Saward; for example the extreme padding which made the dialogue in THE TWO DOCTORS and TIMELASH seem like pantomime. Surely a *good* script editor can't believe a script is *too* action-packed and needs slowing down, even in the forty-five minute format ? Saward did !! All old enemies returning have suffered radical changes in character motivation and there has been an extreme lack of good character continuity which should have been corrected at script stage and ONLY Saward can be blamed for this. And, oh yes, the case of the feeble Cybermen in ATTACK of which Saward has just confessed he wrote after all, despite denials previously. He also claims to despise panto elements but a definition of pantomime is 'a play with exaggerated characters – caricatures – slapstick – over-the-top dialogue / acting – black comedy...' or am I talking about his own REVELATION OF THE DALEKS ? And then there's the case of Saward cashing in on the success of CAVES: is it mere coincidence that almost every character in Season 22 had a weapon based on Stotz's machine-gun or that nearly every villain lusted after Peri ?!

LUDICROUS

JEREMY ALDERSON, CAMBRIDGE

I can't believe the front page rumour (DWB #38) of a possible 10-part Season 24. The BBC has no continuing drama series less than *12* (and some like Grange Hill are 24 episodes long). How can the BBC justify employing a producer and script editor all year round for just 4 hours of television ? What if a strike occurred and, say, 4 episodes were lost (like in 1983) ? A six-part season would be ludicrous !

As a desirable minimum I'd recommend 16 (four 4-parters) to run September-December.

OUTRAGEOUS OPINION !

TIM MUNRO, Dalton, HUDDERSFIELD

DWB#39 was excellent and as lively and informative as ever. I must, however, comment on the now seemingly obligatory offensive letter, this time the particularly naive work of Paul Kirkley. "*Let me tell you what DOCTOR WHO is*", he begins. Well, I've been watching for over a decade so I hardly need it explaining to me ! If I read him right he is saying fans *must* love the current episodes and completely ignore the past ! Long ago ex-DWAS president Jan Vincent-Rudzki said that a fan did not have to be a fan of what DOCTOR WHO *is* but of what DOCTOR WHO *was* or *should* be. Sensible views, I think, and far more so than Paul Kirkley's outrageous opinion.

INTERVIEWED WITH TIM COLLINS ON SATURDAY, 23RD AUGUST '86

PART 2

GL: READING THE FAN PRESS, YOU MUST BE AWARE THAT THERE'S BEEN A HUGE UPROAR OVER BONNIE LANGFORD ?
I think that's one area where they're going to eat their words , which is quite nice !

"IF YOU DO COMEDY, YOU CAN DAMN WELL DO ANYTHING ELSE !"

TC: YOU'RE VERY IMPRESSED WITH HER ?
I'm VERY impressed, yes. I've worked with her before in panto and I know that Bonnie is a total professional. I will say that there aren't many things on the criticisms of John Nathan-Turner I'll comment on—because a lot of it's opinion and a lot of it's just stupid—but the thing about him having a "light entertainment obsession" I think is extremely odd ! *Who* are these light entertainment people he's supposed to be obsessed with ? He has never worked in light entertainment for a start—he's always worked in drama. His background is—
GL: BUT WHAT ABOUT HIS PANTOMIME FLIRTATION ?
Well, we do pantomimes. The fact that he puts on pantomimes is a different thing altogether.
GL: I COULD NAME AT LEAST 25 ACTORS WHO FIT THE 'LE' MOULD.
But the ones I've seen in those lists are people like Rodney Bewes and co. who are actors !
GL: LEEE JOHN FROM 'IMAGINATION' WAS A POP STAR.
Who was he ?
TC: HE WAS IN 'ENLIGHTENMENT'.
Before my time.
GL: DO YOU REMEMBER 'IMAGINATION', THE SOUL GROUP ?
Yes, I remember. Was he good ? Did he do the part well ?
GL: NO, HE WAS AWFUL. AND THEN THERE WAS CHLOE ASHCROFT FROM 'PLAY SCHOOL', TO NAME JUST TWO.
But she was an actress before she was in Play School. Her aunt is Peggy Ashcroft and Maggie Ashcroft is another relative. She's an actress. Yes, it is sometimes tempting to get *names* into the show, but the other thing that happens is that names *want* to get in the show. You could try and get all those people into a lot of other drama shows and they wouldn't want to do it. There is something about DOCTOR WHO which attracts them all. I read one of the letters in your Summer Special (#36 / 37) saying what a wonderful idea it was to have Brian Blessed in the show , and the writer quite correctly points out that you don't know *what* part he's playing so *how* can you say it's a good idea ? Brian was wonderful and is wonderful. Joan Simms was wonderful—you might say she does Carry Ons but she's an actress. She's been in serious stuff. You're doing what the producers and directors do to us all the time which is type-cast. The most difficult thing to do is comedy, and if you can do comedy you can damn well do anything else !

Bonnie has approached the part with the attitude that as an actress she's delighted to get the chance because she has been stuck in light entertainment. She's entered it with exactly the right spirit and she is *very* bright for 21 years old (22 now). She worries me because she's always right on the button ! I've now had two companions who always know the lines quicker than I do , and know the moves quicker than I do ! A pain in the a*se really but she is EXCELLENT. And she's a different sort of a companion too—she's got lots of go, and did you see her in Peter Pan ?
TC: SHE RECEIVED RAVE REVIEWS FOR THAT.
She was STUNNING in that. People say she's the best Peter Pan since the war. Go and see it, it's on tour.

She's been made to work hard. The directors have really worked her because occasionally she was tempted to be a little larger than life because she is a stage performer, but that's through being on the stage a lot.
TC: BUT HAS SHE TONED THAT DOWN ?
Not half, yes !

TC: HAS SHE APPROACHED THE ROLE AS A LONG TERM COMMITMENT ?
You'll have to ask *her* that. I don't know about her career intentions. Obviously she's an ambitious, hard-working girl and I shouldn't think she'd want to do DOCTOR WHO for ten years. Someone like an old hack at my age of life would be quite happy to !
TC: BUT IF THE SHOW DOES CONTINUE SHE WOULD STILL BE THE COMPANION ?
As far as I know, yes.

"PEOPLE CAN CRITICISE TINY LITTLE THINGS IN A GRAEME HARPER STORY"

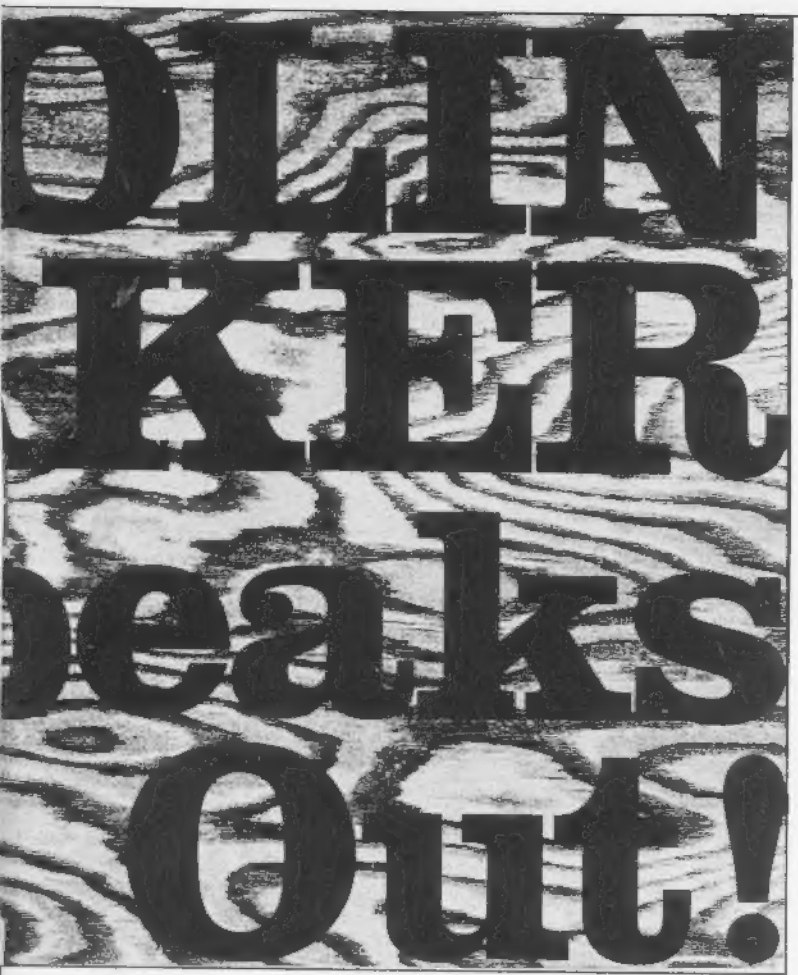
GL: TALKING OF DIRECTORS, DO YOU NOT FEEL THAT DIRECTORS MORE IN THE MOULD OF GRAEME HARPER WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE APPROPRIATE FOR THE SORT OF SHOW DOCTOR WHO IS ?
I think you should tailor your director to the story. Again I talk about "working with" someone, and Ron Jones I found one of the nicest directors to work with. He creates a lovely atmosphere to work in and he's very receptive to good ideas and he's very firm in squashing bad ones.
GL: BUT SURELY IT'S THE END PRODUCT ON THE SCREEN THAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT—
I thought VENGEANCE ON VAROS was one of the best stories in terms of the directorial input I've ever seen.
GL: I JUST THOUGHT THERE WERE A LOT OF SHOTS THAT WERE WASTED , LIKE IN 'THE TWO DOCTORS' WHERE YOU SEE A SONTARAN REMOVING HIS HELMET FOR THE FIRST TIME IN LONG SHOT.
People can criticise tiny little things in a Graeme Harper story if you wanted to. I tend not to view the individual moments — I watch the whole thing. I suspect that even Peter Moffat would admit that if you're filming in a hacienda in Spain you are tempted to show why you've gone out there, so it is tempting to have the wide shot rather than a close shot. OK, that's fair enough. If he'd been filming that in the studio he might have gone for a different shot, but that's a human failing. Peter Moffat is a very experienced director, and he did my first one.

GL: ONE OF THE CRITICISMS THAT ERIC SAWARD LEVELS AT JN-T IS THAT HE'S SCARED OF TALENTED DIRECTORS—
I think that's nonsense.
GL: —AND THAT HE GIVES PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT TO HIS FRIENDS AND NONE OF THE OLD AND GREAT DIRECTORS ARE INVITED BACK ?
You'd have to ask Graeme Harper himself, but I know that Graeme is very much in demand. Now, if you've done a DOCTOR WHO story and then you're offered Star Cops and DOCTOR WHO, what do you do ? You take the new, different one. He'd love to do another DOCTOR WHO, but if he gets offered something new and different he'll do that. It's true of many directors. Now, a lot of the older directors—who are very experienced and very accomplished directors—go out of fashion, and new and young producers want to get new and young directors because the attitude is "I don't want to use old Fred Bloggs—he's done it for 40 years". What they overlook is that 40 years does actually teach them something.

Also, an awful lot of directors won't touch DOCTOR WHO because they're terrified of it. For instance—this has been told to me in confidence so I can't give you names—a very well known director—well known for being extremely autocratic as well as doing wonderful stuff—was offered a DOCTOR WHO by John. Now, John would not do that if he was "frightened" of good directors. And he said "I'd love to, John, but for one thing—I couldn't cope with all that technical stuff". He could cope with Laurence Olivier and people like that, but he said "there's no way I could master all that C s O, etc.—I've never done it". And that was why he turned it down, so I think it's wrong to say John's frightened of good directors.

""PERI, EH ?"—THAT WAS A JOHN NATHAN-TURNER AND ME COLLABORATION"

GL: WHAT ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THE SCRIPTS ? LOOKING AT PAST STORIES DO YOU NOT FEEL YOU'RE GETTING A BIT OF A RAW DEAL SCRIPTWISE ?
It's not my impression.
GL: 'TIMELASH', FOR EXAMPLE ?
TIMELASH was not my favourite script.
GL: DID YOU NOT WANT TO QUESTION THE BLATANT SCRIPT INCONSISTEN-



CIES SUCH AS THE BORAD SUDDENLY COMING BACK TO LIFE AT THE END ?
Well, the cloning thing was all explained. I *have* changed scripts, but it was made fairly clear to me at the beginning that the kind of way DOCTOR WHO is made does not allow time for the actor who is playing the Doctor to sit at planning meetings and discuss how the scripts are going to be written. And Eric and John both preferred to work on the basis that they would finish a script, and then if I had any ideas they would either say "No" or "Yes, alright, we'll change it". I am a little more inclined to want things to be accurate in terms of the history of the show than some others are maybe.

TC: MATTHEW ROBINSON HAS SAID THAT DURING THE SHOOTING OF 'ATTACK OF THE CYBERMEN', YOU SAID THAT THE DOCTOR SHOULD NOT SHIVER DURING THE TOMB SCENES BECAUSE HE HAS A DIFFERENT BLOOD TEMPERATURE ?
Yes, yes. We spent hours discussing what they meant—whether he would feel the cold more or less and in the end they just said "Just do it, for God's sake, and shut up !".
TC: MATTHEW ALSO POINTED OUT THAT HAD YOU ALLOWED FOR THAT IN 'ATTACK', IN SPAIN FOR 'THE TWO DOCTORS' YOU WOULD HAVE BOILED TO DEATH !
Yes, there are those problems. And how, when gas errupts into a corridor I'm directed to choke and splutter, when in another episode it says I cut off my respiratory circuit. Yes, there are those all the time. For instance, I said in ATTACK that the Doctor, as far as I can remember, had said at some time that you can't fire a weapon in the Tardis, and they said that was dealt with in a previous story and you can now, and I insisted on checking that was so. As far as I can say, I *will* do that, and on storylines I also say "Look, isn't this a bit tacky", and they may say "Do it, that's what you're paid for", and then I do because that is my job. My job is to *act*, it is not to write or produce or to co-produce or to co-write.

TC: YOU HAVE OFTEN SAID THAT YOU ARE VERY GOOD AT LEARNING ONE SCRIPT, DOING IT AND THEN FORGETTING IT, BUT DO YOU HAVE ANY FAVOURITE LINES FROM SEASON 22 OR 23 THAT DO STICK IN YOUR MIND ?
Usually ones that I've put in !
TC: SUCH AS ?
I was actually allowed to put more in this season, which is quite nice. I attempted to in the first season and was, quite rightly, told "No, I think Robert Holmes would rather you said *his* lines rather than your witty ones as you put it". But lines I put into the first season, like "Peri, eh ?"—that was a kind of John Nathan-Turner and me collaboration. All the tacky jokes come from me. I can't remember what they were in this season now, but along those lines.

"A BRITISH FAN IS MORE LIKELY TO BE CRITICAL"

GL: DO YOU LIKE MEETING THE FANS, BE THEY AMERICAN OR BRITISH ?
Yes, yes I do. I think it depends on the fan and what you're doing at the time. If you're actually having a wee in a public lavatory and someone comes up and asks you for your autograph—which has actually *happened* to me—you do think "Couldn't you wait outside, and would you please STOP looking over the top of the urinal !".

GL: DO YOU NOTICE ANY MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND THE AMERICAN FANS ?
There is an enormous difference between the British character and the American character, and that's reflected in the fans. Whereas a British fan is (a) more likely to be critical, which doesn't endear him to me but is to be expected, and (b) is likely to say even if he was potty about the programme "I enjoy DOCTOR WHO, Mr Baker", an American fan on the other hand would tend to say "Aw, gee, the Darkturrr !", and little bits of their body would fall off as they scream and rush around the place ! I view the latter with the same kind of cynical view as I do the former.
TC: AND TREAT THE TWO 'IMPOSTERS' JUST THE SAME ?
Yes, yes. The shy approach of the British fan might mask a lot more appreciation than the brash approach of the American fan, or vice versa. I'm not saying there's any inherent difference between the two that makes one better than the other.
I look at you two and I would put you in the category of the typical British fan: young, male, between 17 and 25, inclined to apparent seriousness. Actually you, Gary, are an exception because you've got a twinkle, but the average fan in this country—like you, Tim—would be a typical fan.
TC: THANK YOU !
No criticism implied ! Whereas in America the typical fan would be female, slightly older, maybe inclined to be a little overweight. That's why they like me so much, because I am a little overweight myself !
GL: BUT NO RED WINE !
I'd like to put the record straight about that, actually.
GL: PLEASE DO. WE'VE ALL HEARD THE SO-CALLED 'EXCLUSIVES' FROM THE GUTTERS OF FLEET STREET AND IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE YOU OFFICIALLY PUTTING THE MATTER INTO PERSPECTIVE.
Right. Charles Catchpole is a reporter on The Sun with whom I had done interviews before, and had actually been very pleasant and sympathetic at the time when my son died. He had done an article round about that time, and I had met him and thought "This is a nice chap, this is a reporter I can trust". So when I got a message to ring him, about two months ago, I did, and he said :
What's all this I hear about you putting weight on ?
I don't know, Charles, what have you been hearing ?
I hear you've put 2 stone on since they cancelled the show ?
I haven't—I'm about the same weight as I was a year ago and two years ago.
Oh, I'd heard you'd put on a huge amount of weight ?
Sorry ! I'd like to be able to say yes, because then I might be able to do something about it and it would be no skin off my nose, but I'm afraid I haven't. I'm more or less the same—in fact I'm probably even 4 or 5 pounds less than when the season finished.
Oh ? By the way, is your wife a good cook ?
Yes, she is actually.
Do you eat lots of steak and kidney pud ?
Do you know, I haven't had steak and kidney pud for 20 years and I hate it because I love 'em !
Do you drink a lot ?
Well, my wife and I might have a bottle of wine over dinner sometimes. . .

"PEOPLE SAY WHY DON'T YOU SUE 'THE SUN', BUT THERE'S NO POINT"

And then I read an article four days later which read "I HAVE PUT ON TWO STONES", says Colin disgruntledly. "I HAVE STEAK AND KIDNEY PUD WITH ALL THE TRIMMINGS AND I DRINK A BOTTLE OF WINE A DAY". I actually photocopied it, underlined in red all the bits that Charles had made up and posted it to him with a little note saying "More in sorrow than in anger—I thought you were different from the rest". And I saw him about a week ago and he turned the other way and walked away because he must have known. And you know, it *was* in sorrow more than anger because I know the press ask you the "Have you stopped beating your wife ?" question so they can make up a story. People say why don't you sue The Sun, but there's no point. All it does is prolong a story which is trivial enough as it is, although it is irritating when I get fan magazines from America which report that apparently Colin Baker has put on two stone and the production team are worried.
GL: THOSE PHOTOS—
The Peter Pan ones ? They were DREADFUL ! What happened was I was in full costume and underneath the costume was this sodding great harness, and the harness pushed everything up ! They were *awful*. And the girl who did my hair for that one did it in a hurry and made it all look tightly curled and made my head look like an enormous football ! I do agree that it fitted in with those stories, but I have NOT put on weight. You can see me now !
TC: AND IT'S A SHAME BECAUSE IT WOULD BE NICE TO BE ABLE TO BELIEVE CATCHPOLE SINCE HE'S THE ONE WHO 'REPORTED' IN 'THE SUN' THAT SEASON 24 IS TO GO AHEAD.
And also Charles has always been a great fan of the show and presumably will remain so.

>

GL: HE'S APPARENTLY A GREAT DRINKING PAL OF NATHAN-TURNER'S.
Is he ? I think John was as surprised. In fact I was called into a costume fitting at the beginning of the season ostensibly to make a new waistcoat, and I got the distinct impression that they were all thinking where there's smoke there's fire and were amazed when I put my costume from the previous season on in exactly the same way as before, and that was about a week after the article. I just think it's very sad, but you can't really take on the press and win. Ian Botham tried that with every justification and they just—
TC: ATTACKED LIKE A PACK OF HUNGRY WOLVES.
GL: NOW THEY'RE ALL PRAISING HIM FOR BREAKING THE WORLD RECORD FOR THE NUMBER OF TEST WICKETS.
And he was only two wickets away from the record when they were all after him. How lucky we are to have Ian Botham ! It's what we want in the world today; larger than life characters ! He's a kind of DOCTOR WHO character, isn't he ? It's a shame because of all the press comment he's become guarded and bitter as someone like him should be allowed free rein.

"THE VIEWERS WILL FLOCK TO THEIR TV SETS TO WATCH THE NEW SERIES"

GL: MICHAEL GRADE IS GOING TO EXAMINE THE NEW SERIES AND AXE IT IF IT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH OR NOT ATTRACTING THE VIEWERS, BUT WHAT JUSTIFICATION HAS HE FOR DOING THAT BECAUSE IT MEANS HE'S SAYING THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE THE PEOPLE IN THE B B C EXPERIENCED ENOUGH TO TURN IT ROUND WITH AN ENDLESS FORMAT. DO YOU AGREE ?
I think you should put that in a statement from yourself . I'd much rather *you* said it than I did ! I would say that there is much less incentive for a Director of Programmes to continue a programme that has been started by his predecessors, however successfully, than there is than making *his* mark in the job by bringing in his own programmes. If you view a particular programme—however longrunning—with disfavour, then you have been put into a job to make those kind of decisions. If he chooses to axe it, it's irrelevant what you or I might think about it.
GL: BUT IF HE AXES IT BECAUSE IT'S NOT MADE WELL ENOUGH, HE IS SAYING HIS STAFF ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO DO THEIR JOBS ?
Or he might be saying that there's nobody that good anymore or that the format is exhausted. I don't believe that's true, but it's a tenable theory.

GL: TIM AND I RECENTLY INTERVIEWED SYDNEY NEWMAN—
Ah, the Number One man !
GL: HE HAS A MEETING WITH MICHAEL GRADE IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS AND HE THINKS THERE IS STILL LIFE IN THE DOCTOR WHO FORMAT.
I'm sure there is. I range between optimism and pessimism, but I am by nature an optimist. I have to be honest and say that were I a viewer I would be almost as worried out of nostalgia and so many other things about its possible demise as I am as a professional actor who needs it for my livelihood, so I'm not just being selfish. I think it would be a very sad day if DOCTOR WHO went.
It may well work that the possibility of it going will mean the viewers will flock to their TV sets in their millions to watch the new season. I do have to say that the one issue where I would take Michael Grade to task—were he interested in my opinion—would be on the viewing figures. He said they were disappointing. I think between seven and nine million, which is what we got, is actually very good.

TC: WHAT'S RIDICULOUS IS THAT EVERY SINGLE PROGRAMME HE'S PUT ON AT 5 20 SINCE—
Has got less, yes.
GL: TRIPODS, WONDERWOMAN ETC. ALL FIVE MILLION AND BELOW (SIC).
I'm very surprised that nobody has ever pointed that out.
TC: AND IF THAT TIME-SLOT IS VITAL TO SET UP THE REST OF SATURDAY EVENING, THEN PRESUMABLY HE SHOULD HAVE REPLACED DOCTOR WHO WITH SOMETHING THAT WAS GUARANTEED TO GET HIGHER RATINGS—AND HE DIDN'T.
That's the one thing that I think has weakened his argument. I think our figures were very healthy. What did Peter's last season average ?
GL: 7.1 MILLION.
So about the same as mine ?
TC: YES, THE RATINGS FOR SEASONS 21 AND 22 WERE ALMOST IDENTICAL.
Many people had said there had been a drop since Colin Baker took over and it's the same !

GL: IN HIS INTERVIEW, SAWARD ALLEGES JN-T SITS AROUND DURING REHEARSAL FUMBLING THROUGH PAGES OF SCRIPT AND IS USUALLY AT A LOSS TO WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT AND WHAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE HAPPENING NEXT ?
Pip and Jane Baker, who have been Presidents of the Writers' Guild and involved with motion pictures and big American TV series, say that John Nathan-Turner is one of the best producers they have ever worked with in television in terms of the interest he takes in the scripts—his grasp of the scripts—which is not the impression Eric gave. Now, obviously I don't know John as a producer during the script stage so I can't say whether it's true or false, but when the writers say that they are impressed by the fact that the producer knows *exactly* what's going on during this last season during all their dealings with him does actually put the lie to what Eric has been saying. People forget that at the beginning of John's period everyone was saying how wonderful he was.
GL: YES, THAT WAS SIX YEARS AGO. HE HAS STAYED AN AWFULLY LONG TIME.
Do you think Tom was stagnating after seven years.
GL: YES.

"I WOULD BE EXTREMELY SORRY TO SEE JOHN GO"

TC: THERE WILL BE A REASSESSMENT OF JN-T WHEN HE LEAVES. IT TENDS TO WORK IN WAVES IN THAT WHEN THERE IS A NEW GUY—WHETHER HE BE THE DOCTOR OR PRODUCER—PEOPLE TEND TO THINK "WOW, THIS IS WONDERFUL, NEW, DIFFERENT, AND THE OLD ONE WAS TERRIBLE"—
Not necassarily. I got an awful lot of "Oh no, not him !".

TC: WHILE I ACCEPT YOUR POINT ABOUT WHAT JN-T HAS DONE FOR THE SHOW, HE HAS DONE HIMSELF IMMEASURABLE HARM BY STAYING ON FOR SO LONG, ESPECIALLY FROM HIS CAREER POINT OF VIEW. HE HASN'T, FOR EXAMPLE, DONE AS MOST OF HIS PREDECESSORS HAVE DONE, MOVING FROM SHOW TO SHOW AND UP A PEG EACH TIME ?
He's aware of that himself.

GL: ARE YOU CONFIDENT THAT SEASON 24—SHOULD IT GO AHEAD—WILL HAVE A NEW PRODUCTION TEAM ?
Obviously we would have a new script editor, but whether we have a new producer or not is ultimately up to the B B C and JN-T. The B B C has ways of bringing pressure on people and they do like the status quo. John himself would like to go on and do other things.
GL: WHY DON'T THEY GIVE HIM OTHER THINGS TO DO THEN ?
There are so many people at the B B C sitting round doing nothing, very talented people. Again it's fashion, you see.
GL: BUT DON'T YOU AGREE IT WOULD BE TO THE BENEFIT OF YOUR CHARACTER TO HAVE A NEW CREATIVE INPUT TO STRETCH YOUR POTENTIAL ?
It *might* be, but then again it might not. I might get someone who is just a timeserver; who does not give a damn about the programme and who commissions cheap, bad scripts. And he could say "Stop arguing and do the scripts or I'll sack you". That could happen. It could also happen that someone with enormous energy, a new Douglas Adams or a new John Nathan-Turner, comes into the show. Obviously any new broom is going to sweep something — it might not be clean but it would be a sweep of some kind. Whilst I would be extremely sorry to see John go for all the reasons I have stated—I have a personal fondness for him, I get on extremely well with him—I have not found him ever frightened of tackling anyone or anything, and in that respect he has been a strong producer and a fair producer.
But it's like when everyone says "Who did you like best, Nicola or Bonnie ?". I was very sad to see Nicola go, but it was exciting to work with someone else. I would be very sad to see John go, but depending on who the other guy was, there would be a little nagging fear that a new producer might want another Doctor, because he wouldn't have chosen me so he'll be waiting for me to go so he can choose *his* Doctor.
TC: YES, BUT TOM—WHOSE RECORD YOU WANT TO BEAT—WENT THROUGH 4 PRODUCERS.
Yes, but Tom put his own personal stamp on the programme. I mean, I'd like to make all the decisions.
TC: YOU FEEL YOU HAVEN'T PUT THE SAME KIND OF STAMP ON THE SHOW AS TOM HAS ?
No, I'm not talking about the end result. I'm talking about the process of *doing* it. I understand that Tom took an active interest in scripts, in camera angles, in *everything* that went on and was allowed to.
TC: BY ONE PRODUCER RATHER THAN OTHERS.
Yes, I think that's dangerous even though I'd love to do it. I'd love to be in on the script-writing stage—I've got so many wonderful ideas. *I* think they're wonderful, anyway. I won't say what some of them are because it would be nice to do some of them one day. For instance, I thought the Celestial Toymaker script was super and I was really excited about that and I was very sorry when that was shelved.
GL: HOW WAS THE SEASON THAT WAS CANCELLED SHAPING UP ?
That was the only one that I saw. I thought there were some smashing ideas in that. I thought it was very well constructed.

TC: ARE YOU STILL ANXIOUS TO WORK WITH THE AUTONS ?
Yes.
GL: IT'S A GREAT SHAME ROBERT HOLMES DIDN'T COMPLETE HIS SCRIPT.
You know more about that than I do.
GL: I SPOKE TO HIS WIDOW, PAT, AND SHE CONFIRMED THAT HE HADN'T ACTUALLY STARTED SCRIPTING IT—HE HAD ONLY DRAFTED IT UP. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT THAT IS RECOGNISABLY ROBERT HOLMES SO DO YOU HOPE 'THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET' WILL BE A FITTING TRIBUTE TO HIM ?
It has its Holmesian elements, yes. I have to see it. The difference between doing and seeing is enormous. I must be honest that I wasn't very impressed by TIMELASH when I was doing it and actually I felt the end result was much better than I feared it was going to be, with one or two reservations, but one has got to get more distance from these things. When you've just done a piece of work you feel terribly possessive. In a couple of years time I'll be able to tell you a bit more about how I feel about what I've done.
GL: ON THAT NOTE WE'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR SHOWING SO MUCH INTEREST IN YOUR ROLE AND FOR SPARING THE TIME TO SEE THE FANS AND WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN IN A COUPLE OF YEARS TIME. . .

GL & TC: COLIN BAKER, THANK YOU VERY MUCH



BONNIE LANGFORD'S PRESS-CALL, OCT'20TH (PHOTO: IAN SHOWELL, 'TODAY')

Early in August seven Phoenix personnel were invited by JN-T to see 'The Ultimate Foe' being made, and to my delight I found myself included in the party.

Arriving at the BBC Centre in Shepherd's Bush, we were met by Kate the secretary who issued us with visitors' badges before leading us through endless corridors to the studio wherein she reminded us of the necessity for silence.

What surprised me most on entering the studio was its size. It was nowhere near as large as I had expected and the sets appeared very cramped. There were massive pieces of camera lifting equipment scattered around and the ceiling was hidden behind a mass of technical gadgetry. At that time camera rehearsals were in progress and the actual recording would take place later that day. Colin Baker, in half costume, and Bonnie Langford were rehearsing a scene and my heart sank at the way Colin delivered a line, giving the distinct impression that this was the cue for a song. However, nothing more happened as next there was a lot of bustle as the cameras began descending on a miniature set with a small corridor off the side, which seemed to be precariously propped up with wood at the back but which revealed lots of strange lights and control panels on the side in view of the cameras.

There were several people standing around watching, one of whom called "Hello, Paul", and headed towards us. "Hello, Janet", he replied, obviously pleased to meet her, and I asked Paul, in all innocence, *who* this person was, which was greeted with gasps of horror from the team members around me for I had failed to recognise that this quiet-spoken and demure young lady before me was none other than the 'mouth-on-legs' herself, Janet Fielding! As I slunk away to find a hole to hide in, Paul quickly signed her up for CyberCon which was barely a week away.

Meanwhile, the tiny set had become crowded with actors dressed as tulips— their heads completely pink and surrounded by petals. Apparently these were the Vervoids: botanical experiments that had taken to wandering around and groaning a lot!

To our surprise, we recognised the person who was directing the actors and who appeared to be in charge of proceedings as Ian Fraser—husband of Fiona Cumming—rather than Chris Clough. The acoustics in the studio must have been fantastic as he was in contact with the control box just by speaking quietly ahead of himself from any position in the room.

In the scene being recorded, the Vervoids appeared to have captured Melanie and were drooling over her. Luckily, hidden round a corner was the Doctor who mimed throwing an object at them, shouted 'BANG! FLASH!", grabbed Melanie and ran off with her down the very short corridor up which a camera was pointing to capture the departing duo on tape. Meanwhile, in response the Vervoids started waving their tendrils about and groaning in a most wretched fashion, causing great hilarity among the onlooking production crew. what a strange way for grown men to make a living I thought! Indeed, when finished, one Vervoid wandered off the set, sat down opposite us, took his tulip head off and sunk his

JN-T then appeared on the floor and the whole atmosphere on the floor altered perceptibly. There was no more giggling when the Vervoids went through their groaning routine—suddenly everybody was taking their jobs very seriously and studying the scene with deep concentration.

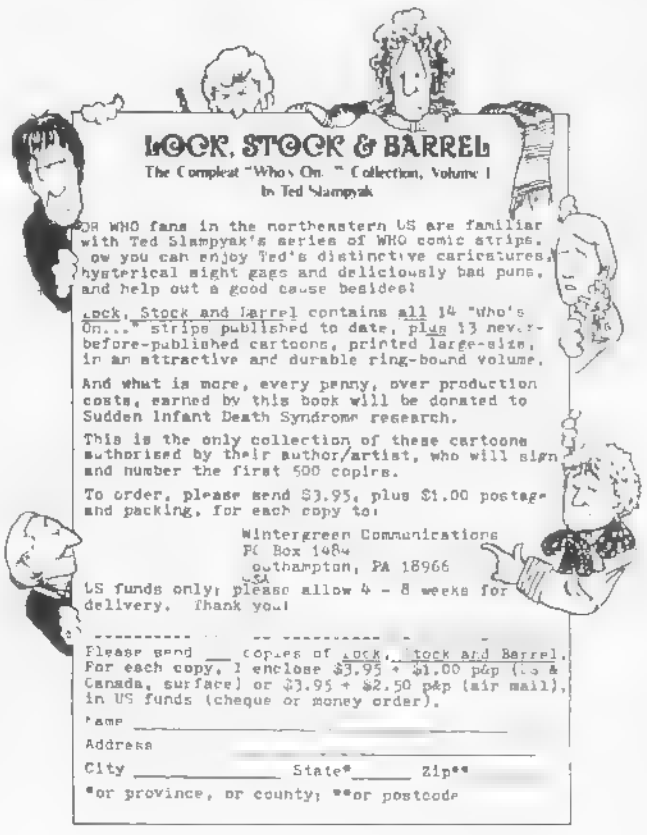
We looked around the rest of the recording studio and saw Honor Blackman and Michael Craig wandering by in costume. There was a large Tardis interior set containing an exercise bike and the console on which a couple of technicians were working. Tucked away in a corner was the Tardis exterior and my illusions were instantly shattered by the discovery that front and back were identical, with a door at both ends and nothing but darkness inside.

There were also some spaceship corridors to explore, along which we found a room with some gigantic mounds of standard green gunge in the middle, presumably the birthplace of the Vervoids.

Apparently Ian Fraser (wherever was Chris Clough ?) had decided that all that could be done with the scene being rehearsed had been achieved as there was a sudden rush of actors and cameramen to the Tardis set. Without a pause for breath, Colin Baker leapt on to the exercise bike and straight into rehearsing the scene. He began peddling furiously, counting as he went, and Melanie then offered to fetch him some carrot juice as a reward. While she went to fetch it, the Doctor stopped peddling (but continued counting) only to start peddling again a moment before she reappeared.

Soon it was time for us to leave, and on reflection a couple of interesting points occurred to me. At the time, I thought how nice it was of the actors to come and chat to spectators so readily, but in hindsight they were only too eager to grasp any opportunity of relieving the utter tedium involved in repeating scenes countless times and hanging around waiting for the cameraman to set up for the next. In fact it was incredible how inspired and fresh the actors managed to appear in front of the cameras when, once they stopped acting, it was clear how mind-numbingly bored they actually were. Also, it was striking how different what we saw relayed onto the screen appeared compared to what was actually being recorded (there were monitors around the studio showing what the cameras were actually picking up). With my eye I could see cramped, tacky sets and unimpressive and unrealistic looking aliens, but the pictures on the screen, however, were much more impressive (the colours different, the scale of things larger and the aliens genuine). Had I not seen both at the same time I would've found it hard to believe that the cameras were showing the same scenes that I was seeing.

All in all, a fascinating morning, and I would like to thank JN-T for enabling me to achieve a personal ambition—*Steve Bailey*


LOCK, STOCK & BARREL
The Compleat "Who's On..." Collection, Volume 1
by Ted Slampyak
FOR WHO fans in the northeastern US are familiar with Ted Slampyak's series of WHO comic strips. Now you can enjoy Ted's distinctive caricatures, hysterical sight gags and deliciously bad puns, and help out a good cause besides!
Lock, Stock and Barrel contains all 14 "Who's On..." strips published to date, plus 13 never-before-published cartoons, printed large-size, in an attractive and durable ring-bound volume.
And what is more, every penny, over production costs, earned by this book will be donated to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome research.
This is the only collection of these cartoons authorised by their author/artist, who will sign and number the first 500 copies.
To order, please send $3.95, plus $1.00 postage and packing, for each copy to:
Wintergreen Communications
PO Box 1484
Southampton, PA 18966
USA
US funds only; please allow 4 - 8 weeks for delivery. Thank you!
Please send ___ copies of Lock, Stock and Barrel. For each copy, I enclose $3.95 + $1.00 p&p (US & Canada, surface) or $3.95 + $2.50 p&p (air mail), in US funds (cheque or money order).
Name
Address
City State* Zip**
*or province, or county; **or postcode

. . .*Continued from page 3*

and far more frightening danger to the Doctor would be a watertight frame-up by a determined enemy (as in THE DEADLY ASSASSIN's seemingly inescapable and predetermined plot) and not, as we now have, an over-blown, overstated stitch-up which would rightly be laughed out of any kangaroo court.

The Doctor's mysterious conversion to Sil's cause is therefore not as worrying as it might otherwise be — the evidence is so obviously rigged. There is none of the tension of MEGLOS; then we knew that the lost Zolpha-Thuran (chillingly portrayed by Tom Baker) was impersonating the Doctor, and the concern was how the Doctor, seemingly hopelessly trapped, would avoid being implicated by Meglos. In 'Mindwarp' we were merely curious to see how the Doctor was being framed — an intellectual rather than an emotional viewer-involvement. This had a lot to do with Colin Baker's own rather subdued performance, relying largely on his swivelling narrowed eyes and the tightening of his mouth into a severe straight-line slit; though his rather different performance sporting the red cravat in the court scenes was enlivened by a little outrage in his "second-rate gods" outburst. This was again undermined by the Time Lords we are presented with really aren't cut out even to be tenth-rate gods, and certainly not worth getting out of your seat to shout at. They also lack any believable background; they used to be the mystery figures of THE WAR GAMES until Robert Holmes pricked the bubble of their pretension in THE DEADLY ASSASSIN and placed them in a complex society struggle of interpersonal rivalries, and which was developed further in INVASION OF TIME. This was all but forgotten in ARC OF INFINITY, which created the superficial presentation of stock characters which THE FIVE DOCTORS exemplified and handed on to this season's stories. The Time Lords we see today are ciphers, acting out a pantomime trial against a flat cardboard set that owes more to Saturday Gang than Crown Court, let alone DOCTOR WHO. How can such a race overpower the Doctor so easily in episode 8 when they had such a struggle with the Troughton Doctor? And why is the reminder of their extensive power, shown in the episode 1 opening animated sequence of the Tardis in the forcefield, so fleetingly wasted in episode 8?

In contrast, Nicola Bryant held back from the hysterical edge of so much of her previous performances as Peri, and was sympathetic and moving. There was one awkward moment where Peri confessed, in a somewhat stilted sequence, her desire to be "back in my own time with people I love", which wasn't helped by the charming orchestral music which underscored the emotion with dogged insistence ("What is love?" asks Yrcanos; "Listen to the oversimplistic shorthand cues in the soundtrack", we are told). But Nicola Bryant's transformation was so alarmingly different when she became Kiv (additionally visualized by the baldness) that her exit from the series was horribly thrilling. Of the two stock options (marrying or killing her off), this is the one which seemed most appropriate, and which produced the best we've seen of the lead actress since CAVES OF ANDROZANI. It was one of the redeeming aspects of an otherwise unremarkable story. Others were the transient moments of humour — a delightful cameo by the Mentor in episode 8, and Kiv's craving for seafood after his first transplant. It was something of a coincidence, however, that the second body was so very like the original Kiv. The real highpoint of the 4 episodes was the final one, making much use of variable speed editing and visual effects which hyped up the assassination of Peri / Kiv, and a welcome lift to 3 episodes of almost entirely studio-bound meanderings in both direction and scripting.

The viewing public may be familiar with DOCTOR WHO as a unique conflation of the series and serial formats, and yet the pre-titles introductions by unenthusiastic BBC continuity announcers must make us aware that the programme (even if for this season only) is a continuing serial of 14 episodes: this is the most important innovation of this set of stories. However, in each section of evidence, there is a need for some element of conclusion and comprehensibility, even if there is to be reference back later on. The fact that the Doctor has inconveniently lost his memory (and yet, uncharacteristically, refuses to delay the trial until it returns) means that it hasn't been possible to show the same piece of action from two different perspectives. (I discount the repetition of the sequence in 'Mysterious Planet' because, despite taking different camera POVs (point of view), it was still within the Valeyard's interpretation / selection from the Matrix). There are storyline problems being raised: censorship of evidence, an Inquisitor who seems to know certain elements (why the Doctor was taken out of time, whatever that means) but not others (most of the screened evidence appears new to her). But if this all goes to make up a 4-episode section in which the major characters do little other than run around in small, gloomy sets where the tunnel-lighting creates follow-streaks across the video camera's image, then the framework of the season isn't working, and nobody will stay with the full 14 episodes to see the pieces drop magically into place. If only the diehard fans can follow the plot throughout, then even they are being let down by continuity gaffes.

There are continuing niggles which can be put down to changes this season. The ridiculousness of threatening the Doctor's life at an episode's conclusion is exemplified not only in his manifest physical presence in each trial scene, but also in his grinning re-appearance in every closing title sequence. Director's seem to be favouring the tightening zoom to close-up as a final reaction shot on the Doctor, supported by the 'zing' into the credits. Commenting on Tom Baker's last season as the Doctor, Martin Wiggins suggested in the fan press that there was no further need for the musical 'scream' which heralded the end of each episode. It's an innovation of the Pertwee era and, as Wiggins said, it's the case that some of the best episode endings are not "will the Doctor survive?" but "what will happen next?". Compare the episode endings of WARRIORS OF THE DEEP 1 and LOGOPOLIS 3, for example: the former asks us "will he survive the fall / drowning", the latter asks "how will the Doctor and the Master possibly be able to co-operate?". And, as Tulloch and Alvarado have (in The Unfolding Text) redefined the term 'cliffhanger' as 'suspended enigma', perhaps it is time to look at the episode carry-overs again, especially as this season's 'zing' is a pale warbling imitation of the previous 'scream'.

As part of my continuing manifesto for a better programme, therefore, I would suggest that it adopt a technique experimented with in the past: the freeze frame, especially on an action cut (see GENESIS OF THE DALEKS and PLANET OF EVIL). There would, at a stroke, be no need to have some poor unfortunate (usually the Doctor) 'mugging' a reaction shot in a real-time close-up before the credits crashed in at the end (or rather, with the latest theme, hummed in at the end). The additional shock value of the re-introduced 'scream' over the sight of the image grinding to a halt would reinforce the emotive spur in viewers to watch the following week and see the action resumed. EastEnders, as a traditional soap opera, relies on reaction-shot at the drumbeat conclusion of each episode; DOCTOR WHO is an unusual soap opera and can therefore exploit image manipulation more completely, embracing video technology as much as it does in TRIAL OF A TIME LORD 8.

Because what 'Mindwarp' demonstrates on the whole is that DOCTOR WHO needs more coherence, and particularly now that it is a 14-parter. It is fair to criticise the series at this stage in its run for things like lack of continuity and absence of narrative compulsion, because that is what it requires throughout its present run. The programme cannot rely on a loyal audience's traditional viewing habits in the days of channel-hopping remote-control and video recorders. As BBC1 struggles to regain its familiar viewing figures and early Saturday evening ratings success, DOCTOR WHO has to win an audience on its continuing merits and additional novelties. 'Mindwarp' offered shallow characterisations and a stiff, repetitous storyline. Bonnie Langford's comments on Wogan suggest that there's a lot more running up and down corridors to come. What the programme needs is defence in depth, otherwise it's in deep trouble — *PETER ANGHELIDES*

READERS' VIEWS

DAVID GIBBS: 'The Mysterious Planet' was a definite return to the old style of the '70s, but with a dash of the '80s as represented by Dominic Glynn's stunning soundtrack. Every episode was well-paced (unlike last season's succession of yawns) making for a very exciting story. The only fault I can find with it is that we saw very little of Ravalox. We saw the inside of Katryca's hut, but that was about it for the village, and a few plastic and chrome corridors were meant to represent the entire underground civilisation. Say what you will about The Tripods, but at least that revealed a credible (and extensive) culture as a background for the story . . . *BILLY PRIVILEGE:* The first four episodes seemed to gell together. Robert Holmes' witty script combined with the good acting and model-work and some of the best incidental music I've heard for a long time made for a fast moving start to this all-important season. The only thing which I didn't enjoy was the new theme music... *BRIAN GALLAGHER* The first story was above average but it did seem to be lacking in the direction. The story was good and original typical of Robert Holmes — and it occurs to me that the Time Lords must have something to do with the Earth being moved from its position and the 'secrets'. Perhaps the real reason they have put the Doctor on trial is to prevent him finding out something they really want kept secret ?... *KENNETH HOLLOCK:* I agreed almost entirely with Tim Collins' review, even down to the Drathro / Marvin from Hitch Hikers comparisons. No impact, no suspense, no drama, no cliffhangers how can they pass off the Doctor being killed at the end of episode 3 as exciting when there he is on trial having obviously survived, not that he would have died anyway of course ?! The cliffhanger was once one of the show's strongest points but now it's generally regarded as one of the biggest letdowns. And just think, we're hoping that some of the millions who watch The Late, Late Breakfast Show will catch the ending of our show and be excited enough to want to see its outcome the following week. Some hope !... *MARK WAH.* So what did we get ? Well, we had a plot reminiscent of THE KROTONS — stranded lifeform in its stronghold; ruling by procedure; seeking more energy; keeping the local primitives in check; selecting the most intelligent as servants; and, finally, succumbing to its own power source. Unfortunately there wasn't much else to inspire us. Plot development was non-existent, reaching terminal boredom in parts 2 and 3. The courtroom sets were unimaginative and the corridor sets diabolically tacky (a flaw made more obvious by a plot which required even more running down corridors than usual). Drathro also was tacky and straight out of 'Masters of the Universe'. The much-promised 'wit' failed to materialise on any level, the much-vaunted partnership of Glitz and Dibber proved tiresome and Peri's participation was minimal — is she the most underused companion in the show's history ? Things admittedly livened up in part 4, but the action was fatuous, especially the waste-disposal sequence and the ridiculously easy escape of the Doctor. However, the most depressing facet of the show at the moment is its star. Colin Baker is a wonderful human being and a competent supporting actor but he doesn't have the

talent to sustain a starring role. One might argue that he has very little characterisation to work on, but a good actor can surmount that script deficiency. Colin's acting is two-dimensional; a continuous cynical bluster so overpowering that his infrequent moments of sincerity are rendered obsolete because the casual viewer can't take him seriously (a direct contrast to Davison, incidentally, who had *some* integrity when serious but appeared petulant when he adopted outrage). Colin Baker's Doctor lacks the pathos, charm and compassion of the first four—his passion is hollow, his integrity zero. This vacuum at the centre of the show, coupled with the continually slipshod script-editing, direction, production and general construction of the current DOCTOR WHO constitutes a fundamental flaw in the programme and a flaw which shows no sign of being reduced *(see Editor's Views, right)* ... *PHILIP TRICKER:* As a story in its own right 'The Mysterious Planet' didn't stand up very well, did it? I mean, okay, so Earth / Ravolox has moved a couple of light years off course. So what ?! If the questions posed are not answered satisfactorily later in the Trial then the whole escapade will be totally redundant, which would be a pity as the story had interesting possibilities ... *ROBERT UNSWORTH:* Has DOCTOR WHO benefitted from its break ? Has JN-T tried to save the show? Is it "better than before" ? To all these questions the answer must be NO ! DOCTOR WHO has come back, as Eric Saward said, exactly as it was before, and indeed if compared to REVELATION OF THE DALEKS, much worse. This is not to say 'The Mysterious Planet' was bad, but the way it was produced was, in places, excrutiatingly so. The "wit" we had been promised had the effect of giving us a story totally lacking in either drama or menace.

TIM MUNRO: 'Mindwarp' is a vast improvement on its predecessor. It has a drama and a claustrophobia which has been missing for far too long, and the Trial is beginning to work well too, especially the slow revelation that The Valeyard is far from being an unbiased prosecutor. In all, I do believe we have finally got a classic Colin Baker story, and not before time too ! However, I thought I would get used to the new theme tune in time, but the ghastly thing really grates on my nerves now and annoys me more every time I hear it. Incidentally, I was very sad to see that Anthony Ainley has apparently decided he has nothing to lose and has followed Eric Saward into the wilderness. Mr Ainley is a charming and talented gentleman who has had his talent shamefully wasted and abused by JN-T. The series will be the poorer for his absence, and I can only hope he may return under a new producer so we may see what he can *really* do with the Master when unencumbered by JN-T. If Michael Jayston is to become the new regular villain I only hope he can maintain the magnificent standard which he has set to date. I would hate to see The Valeyard propping up weak and feeble storylines and being robbed of his most interesting characteristics as Ainley was ... *DANIEL BLYTHE:* From what I've seen of it so far 'Mindwarp' could be one of the glossiest and convincing of the whole JN-T era. Everything catches the eye; the landscape, the laboratory, the colourful costumes. This is not to say the story is superficial—far from it. The script is absorbing (although we could do without the scrapyard 'jokes'), and the acting seems to be top-notch. A treat for the ear and eye, but someone do something about those cliffhangers !... *PHILIP TRICKER:* Up to the end of episode 3—apart from the dodgy 'paint-box'-ed start and the flooded Tardis (surely the Tardis should have prevented itself from being dipped ?) — the story and effects have been very good indeed. The direction seems better than usual and thus the performances are somewhat more polished than on 'The Mysterious Planet'. Brian Blessed was excellently cast as Yrcanos (he was thoroughly over-the-top !) and Sil was as disgusting as usual. Colin and Nicola's acting were of an equal calibre. Overall, this story is a real attention grabber !... *ROBERT UNSWORTH:* 'Mindwarp' was good. This had drama, stunning effects, a villainous villain—in fact everything that was needed to hook viewers. It just seems tragic that the story which has influenced so many people as to whether to continue watching was such a disaster. Good DOCTOR WHO perhaps, but not the one to endear the show to a sceptical public after 18 months. 'Mindwarp' should have heralded the season with 'The Mysterious Planet' hidden somewhere in the middle—or not included at all ... *MICHAEL STEVENS:* Episode 5 was, I think, the most boring and silly I've seen for a long time. We can do *without* anymore awful rubber monsters in the tunnels, thankyou very much, and just how all that garish CSO-like 'paintbox' effect was videoed I don't know ! The direction was so crummy I couldn't believe it and the Doctor and Peri seemed even duller than they had been on Ravalox !

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BELOW ARE THE EDITOR'S OWN, PERSONAL OPINIONS:

* STAR RATING = 96½ % *

SCRIPT.....*****

Once again Philip Martin has come up with a winner of a script; thoroughly coherent; 'witty' as opposed to slapstick; rich in characterisation; and with a disturbing underlying moral in the sinister implications of experimentation with genetic engineering. The story on Thoros Beta unfolded with unrelenting pace, comfortably rather than distractingly alongside the events on board the Time Lord ship where it is becoming obvious they have more to do with the Doctor's abduction than originally met the eye. Overall, good old-fashioned DOCTOR WHO simple but thought - provoking enough for both fans of the series and casual viewer alike to follow and, more importantly, enjoy.

ORIGINALITY.....****

Although this story is based on the success of Season 22's VENGEANCE ON VAROS and also has certain similarities to Season 13's BRAIN OF MORBIUS (ie; brain transplantation with the Doctor a prospective donor), such is the unique flexibility of the show's format that what might seem like rehashed ideas can be still be presented novelly in a separate context. However, the alien ambassador was far from original being in reality a recostumed Terileptil (no surprise that VFX designer Peter Wragg also worked on Season 19's THE VISITATION !).

DIRECTION.....***½

With an excellent cast and top-notch designers, Ron Jones' job was made all the more easier. The occasional dodgy direction was still in evidence (Yrcanos and Peri's too easy escape after the Doctor's betrayal being a prime example) but he showed even he has a few tricks up his sleeve and at rare moments it seemed as though Graeme Harper had taken over (ie; the distant shots of Crozier's lab, the Dr being taken out of his time - stream and the slow motion wizardry of the closing minutes—has Ron Jones been watching Robin Of Sherwood ?), and ultimately he delivered easily his finest 'WHO to date. Even so, it is painful to speculate just how more spectacular this story might have been—complete with its multitude of disturbing visual images—had Graeme Harper or someone of equal calibre been in control...

ACTING.....****½

Presented with such a serious script—compared to its B-movie predecessor—nearly all actors displayed great sincerity in their roles. Brian Blessed was suitably over-the-top, acting with obvious gusto, and Patrick (Crozier) Ryecart and Christopher (Kiv) Ryan to name a few were splendidly cast and Nabil Shaban now seems completely at ease as the malevolently vain Sil. Of the regular cast Colin Baker gave easily his finest performance yet and has anyone else noticed how far more convincing he is as the Doctor when playing the role seriously and with wit, rather than as a clown ? It does seem—as with REVELATION OF THE DALEKS—that when presented with a serious and fast-moving script he can be even more of a match than Peter Davison and indeed, in this story at least he was almost on a par with the big four ! Of course a special mention for Nicola Bryant in her most demanding of stories since CAVES OF ANDROZANI. Ironically her last bald minutes as Peri mouthing the chillingly dubbed voice of the mind-transplanted Kiv displayed an acting ability the depth of which has shamefully been neglected by the script writers since CAVES and it is fair to say her character up to MINDWARP has been bitterly wasted since then. But what an exit, even more moving than the death of Adric in that he chose to return to the doomed freighter, whereas Peri was a pathetically innocent victim of the Time Lords' intervention. Afterall, we all know the Doctor would otherwise have saved her...?

SETS.....*****

Andrew Howe-Davies' breathtakingly surreal sets were all the more enhanced by some first-rate lighting (an often neglected area) and dry ice (smoke) which gave the story an immensely claustrophobic feel and atmosphere, and the scope of which was hard to imagine the sets were restricted to the confines of a TV studio.

COSTUMES.....*****

Again, superb all round—Peri, Matrona Kani and Yrcanos' immediately springing to mind.

MONSTERS / ENEMIES.....*****

As such there was no real enemy unless you count the Valeyard. The Mentors are primarily mercenary rather than evil, but the ultimately insane Crozier came closest in his plans to genetically re-engineer the galaxy.

SPECIAL EFFECTS.....****½

The 'paint-box' process worked fairly well in its TV debut, with the amateurish CSO'd affect compensated by the marvellous superimposing of Thoros Alpha on the sea's horizon and indeed the entire story was a tour de force !

MUSIC.....*****

Richard Hartley debuts with one of the best scores I've heard for the series. Complete with both synths and sitars, he captured beautifully the multi-ethnic feel inherent in the favourable casting of black actors (a positive element of the JN-T years), the costumes and sets, complimenting the visual atmosphere perfectly.

OVERALL STORY.....*****

Last issue I ended my review of 'The Mysterious Planet' by saying, "...things can only get worse", but I'm delighted to have temporarily been proved wrong with 'Mindwarp'. This is an all too rare occasion in the JN-T era where the glossiness actually complimented the story because the script worked and wasn't jeopardized for the sake of the look. Although it doesn't rate as highly as the pinnacle that was CAVES, it is certainly of the calibre of the conventional JN-T classic and has definitely earned itself a permanent place among my video collection !

Who Doctors the Schedule?

The BBC magazine The Listener commissioned the following article from ex-Frontier Worlds editor Peter Anghelides which wasn't used because it was commissioned just too late before the season began (instead running a gossip column piece about Saward and Starburst) and as it wasn't suitable for later publication Peter has passed it on to us. Although it isn't written for the fans, Peter feels it should concern them and thinks it well worth considering in the light of his letter to The Times (and Bill Cotton's reply to it) and the piece he wrote for Fan-Aid about realism and naturalism.

In the early seventies, at the height of its popularity, DOCTOR WHO was an early foothold in the BBC1 ratings rise which dominated the early-evening schedule. The programme had been given a fresh lease of life with a new lead actor (Jon Pertwee), the introduction of colour, and a new production team led by Producer Barry Letts and script editor Terrance Dicks, both later to produce Classics series for the Corporation. For millions of viewers, Saturday night meant Grandstand, Basil Brush, DOCTOR WHO and, eventually, the Generation Game. A serial series which had seemed near to cancellation in the late 1960s had re-established itself—not only as a characteristic component of the schedule, but increasingly in the middle seventies also as a generator of spin-off merchandise and valuable overseas sales, principally to Australia and America.

The late seventies, with the charismatic Tom Baker as lead actor, were eventually unable to sustain the programme's popularity, and Baker's last season as the Doctor produced ratings below 8 million which could have condemned many other drama series. The BBC's perception of the programme's role in the schedule had also changed, and BBC1 Controller Alan Hart, unmoved by Guardian editorial comment, put DOCTOR WHO into a midweek early-evening slot, and it became the twice-weekly serial that it seems the BBC had long been waiting for. Triangle had failed; and Angels really indicated that the midweek slot needed, and which producer Julia Smith and script editor Tony Holland later provided on Hart's instructions (though delivered to Michael Grade), a realistic soap opera, intensively produced, snappily directed and closely edited — EastEnders.

However, attempting to fill thirteen weeks with twice-weekly fare for three years changed DOCTOR WHO's content as well as its form. Producer John Nathan-Turner had opted already for an action-adventure stylistic which contrasted strongly with his predecessor's preference for romantic whimsy and pastiche, and was faced with opposition as varied as the glossy but vacuous Buck Rogers, and the dubiously amoral A-Team. Casting the familiar personality as an everyday, less consciously 'alien' lead confirmed the familiarising aspect of the scheduling. He also seemed more receptive to the wishes of a vociferous minority in the programme's audience (since the mid-seventies), the 'fan' correspondents, and there was an 'in' feeling to the programme's self-referencing which only made itself known to the larger audience with the unimaginative reintroduction of older elements—monsters like the Daleks and Cybermen. The weekly cliffhanger ending became less of a structuring element in episodes shown Monday/Tuesday, Tuesday/Thursday or Tuesday/Wednesday.

Michael Grade's revamped Wogan and EastEnders midweek schedule would leave no space for DOCTOR WHO at 7pm, and so the two weekly episodes were conflated for the first season to feature Colin Baker (1985) and run early evenings on Saturdays—a formula suggested by one midweek compilation the previous season to accommodate sports coverage.

The result was very poor ratings—a peak for the opening Cyberman story and subsequent fall-off—and disappointing Appreciation Index figures too. In a year in which the BBC was under close financial scrutiny by a variety of critics, the announcement of the 'temporary' shelving of the programme for a revamp was seen as cheap point-scoring. To threaten BBC finances, it suggested, was to threaten (for example) a programme with a young audience as well as a nostalgic older audience. It also exploited the attention which both the tabloid and the quality press had shown in DOCTOR WHO under Nathan-Turner's shrewd evaluation of print publicity over five years. But if a programme can bring in so much money still in merchandising and sales (a BBC best-seller abroad, supporting over 100 book titles), why bother? The obvious answer would be that the BBC's responsibility is to the home audience, but try telling that to the accountant. Was it too violent? For 5.15pm Saturday perhaps, but the series would have been commissioned for its previous 7pm midweek slot.

At the Edinburgh TV Fest Scheduling Game, Michael Grade, "anticipating the programme has recovered its audience of 9 or 10 million", placed the programme at 5.15pm on Saturday. Real life is more practical (not to mention nostalgic). Grandstand leads in to Roland Rat (abrasive descendent of Basil Brush), DOCTOR WHO (at 5.45pm), The Late Late Breakfast show (latest in a long line of 'Real People' shows). With game show, comedy and drama to follow, it is one of the strongest BBC1 Saturdays for many years.

The current programme is unrecognisable as the 1963 year-round combination of early-evening children's popular science / history / fantasy of Verity Lambert's team. Three linked stories combine to form a 14-week serial which only dabbles in formal innovation: there's a nodding acquaintance with the scratch video, a cautious attempt at non-sequential narrative, cosmetic changes to supporting cast and music (the theme has been rearranged for drum machine and kazoo). But the dependance on the realism currently fundamental to all-video production suggests that there has been little change since those 1970s innovations which made DOCTOR WHO a scheduling building-block.

It has gained nothing from its travels around the programme hours. It has learned little from the developments in non-naturalistic narrative work celebrated / anticipated in Troy Kennedy Martin's recent manifesto, despite being one programme which could have been a site for experimentation within an established popular form. Now it looks as though inheritance (Roland Rat) and pre-echo (Noel Edmonds) will bolster a programme which should be able to build on its own traditional support.* The Appreciation Index for the whole series may yet prove me wrong. That's not what the programme needs: it's what the schedule wants.

*THIS ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN SHORTLY BEFORE THE TRANSMISSION OF THE 23RD SEASON.

PETER MAKES A REFERENCE IN HIS ARTICLE TO THE 'EDINBURGH TV FEST SCHEDULING GAME' WHICH HE EXPLAINS AS FOLLOWS: In the Edinburgh International Television Festival's first session this year, called The Scheduling Game, Michael Grade and a protege of his at LWT (now Director of Programmes there) John Birt were given an array of programmes to put into a fictional Friday night / Saturday evening schedule. Grade put DOCTOR WHO into his Saturday line-up at 5.15pm, but with the proviso that it had regained its usual 9-10 million viewers.

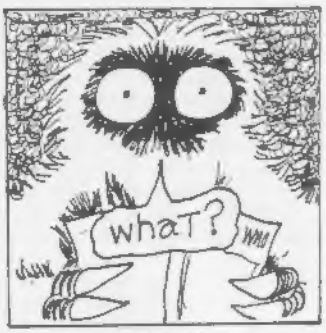
BELOW IS REPRINTED THE PIECE FROM 'THE LISTENER' WHICH REPLACED THE ABOVE ARTICLE AGAIN FOCUSSING ON THE ERIC SAWARD / STARBURST REVELATIONS:

> Doctor Who returns to BBC1 this week after an absence of 18 months during which a big question mark has hung over its future. In a major break with tradition, the new series will consist of just one adventure, 'The Trial of a Time Lord', in which the good doctor will be asked to defend himself on various charges of breaking the laws of time. Accusations of a different kind, but which could have a bearing on the series' long-term prospects of survival, surface in this month's issue of the fantasy magazine Starburst. In a lengthy interview of the kiss-and-tell variety, long-time script editor Eric Saward claims that the Doctor Who production team has been plagued by internal disputes. Saward, who has now left the BBC, is particularly critical of what he calls the series' 'pantomime-ish' feel and its failure to develop female characters who aren't 'just dozy companions' but 'actually reflect modern womanhood'.



DOCTOR EYE

The TRUE Private Eye Doctor Who rip off!



INCLUDES:
Wimmin, Pseuds Corner, Private Lives, Black Nuptials, full colour photos, and all the latest Doctor HOO news!!!!!!!!

Available from:
DOCTOR EYE,
c/o Brigid Cherry,
3B, Well Court,
Dean Village,
Edinburgh,
EH4 3BR.

Price: 85p inclusive of p&p or 60p plus an A4 SSAE. Cheques/p.o made payable to Brian J. Robb.

DWB WINTER-SPRING SPECIAL 1987 ADVERTISING RATES AND DETAILS

Because of an increased print-run for the Special, ad rates are slightly higher than normal but DWB still offers the cheapest rates proportionally and the Special will be read by up to 3,500 fans all over the world. This will be your last chance for some time to advertise in our pages so take advantage of the opportunity NOW as space is filling up very quickly...

FAN RATES

One page (A4 camera ready) £30
Half page (130 x 390mm / 270 x 195mm) £15
Quarter page (130 x 195mm / 65 x 390mm) £8 50
Eighth page (65 x 195mm / 130 x 95mm) £5
(Fan rates apply to fanzines and non-profit making ventures only)

COMMERCIAL RATES
(Sizes as above)

One page: £35
Half page: £18 50
Quarter page: £10
Eighth page: £6

THESE RATES ARE COMPLETELY UNCHANGED FROM THE LAST SPECIAL

ISSUE 41 COPYDATE: December 6

*Ads must comply with the exact dimensions quoted
*Ads in breach of copyright or of an offensive nature are returned
*Black ink only and all text typed

ALL ADS WILL BE FACING MATTER !!

DWBULLETIN

WINTER-SPRING SPECIAL 1987

WE'RE GOING OUT WITH A BANG...

AFTER 40 NON-STOP ISSUES, DWB IS TAKING A WELL-DESERVED BREAK FOR ABOUT 6 MONTHS, BUT WE'VE COMPENSATED FOR THE LOSS OF 5 ISSUES WITH ONE OF THE MOST STUNNING COLLECTION OF FEATURES EVER BROUGHT TOGETHER UNDER ONE COVER, AND APPROPRIATELY WE'VE GONE BACK TO THE VERY ROOTS OF THE SERIES ITSELF FOR THE SOURCE OF OUR INSPIRATION . . .

THE SYDNEY NEWMAN INTERVIEW

Last summer DWB was invited to the North London home of the man who, as Head of BBC Drama during the 1960s, created the legend that is DOCTOR WHO. . .

As well as expounding the many myths that surround the conception of the world's longest-running sci-fi series, Sydney Newman reveals many hitherto unknown secrets of



those first vital few years of existence of his 'child', and by looking at subsequent years up to date we discover whether the show adhered to his original intentions.

And through a look at the rest of his long career, we find that DOCTOR WHO comprises just a tiny fraction of Sydney Newman's awesome output of a lifetime's work . . .

RELIVE 'THE POWER OF THE DALEKS'

Beginning where W.H.Allen left off, we present up to 50 of the stunning off-screen stills owned by Chris Barry, the director of Patrick Troughton's debut story, from episode 2 through to the dramatic finale at the end of part 6. And each still is reproduced larger and clearer than in 'The Early Years', together with plot outlines for each episode so you can relive—or experience for the very first time—this classic adventure from the 4th Season of DOCTOR WHO. . .

(This item is being run in conjunction with 'CT' who are publishing 30 stills per episode for 6 issues commencing with episode 1 in the November 'CT'. Where possible DWB and 'CT' are using different stills to avoid duplication and to see as many of the approximately 40 off-screen stills from this story in print. If you wish to become a member of DWAS while DWB is 'resting', or in order to see more of these unique stills, then send an SAE to The Membership Secretary at: 6 The Elms, 27 Tooting Bec Road, Upper Tooting, London SW17 8BT, and you will be sent an application form).

TROUGHTON AND THE DALEKS SCRUTINIZED

In the Summer Special, Justin Richards so astounded readers with his graphic detailing of camera angles and techniques utilized in TOMB OF THE CYBERMEN in his 'Cyber-Retrospective' that DWB was inundated with letters accusing him of possessing a copy of this missing classic! This, sadly, he doesn't own, but what he does possess is an incredible memory to detail of the early classic tales, and this time he recounts in vivid detail the Troughton Dalek adventures; POWER / EVIL OF THE DALEKS . . .

'MISSION TO THE UNKNOWN' NOVELISED

For the first time in Britain, the much-acclaimed Australian adaption of the most mysterious DOCTOR WHO episode of all sees print. Rosemary Howe faithfully recaptures in book form the occurences in this Doctor / companion-less story that eventually led to THE DALEKS' MASTERPLAN (which she has also novelised into a mammoth publication larger than the standard W.H.Allen paperback).

'PHIL' ART

Phil Bevan captures in dramatic form the most recent encounter between the first Doctor and the Dalek(s) near the Dark Tower on the planet Gallifrey . . .

A FULL COLOUR WRAPAROUND COVER

Another exclusive from the incredible photographic collection of Raymond Cusick who designed many of the early Dalek stories, and in keeping with the Dalek theme of this issue we present a full colour wraparound cover from THE DALEKS. (This print will also be available as an A3 full colour poster).

PLUS. . .

'MONOCHROME TIME TRAVELLERS': A look at this special convention in celebration of the black and white years. . .
TRIAL OF A TIME LORD (PARTS 9-14): We conclude our look at this critical season with a look at the last 6 episodes. Was it up to the standard expected of it . . ?
FUTURE UPDATE: Jeremy Bentham, one of the most respected authorities on DOCTOR WHO, puts the show's future in perspective and reports on the up-to-the-minute development (if any) on the 24th Season . . .
SERIES SURVEY / 1986 READERS POLL: Enter, or else !
NIGEL ROBINSON ON TARGET: Our annual chat with Target editor on the current state on the book front. . .
AN UNEARTHLY...REVELATION: We update our definitive listing with the completion of Season 23. . .
PLUS: All the NEWS, LETTERS, COMMENT . . . & MUCH MORE !!

TO ORDER: Send a crossed cheque / PO payable to DWB for £2.25 (for US send a personal cheque or an International Money Order for $5), to: DWB Winter Special, 5 Whitegate Gardens, HARROW-WEALD, Middlesex HA3 6BW.
CLOSING DATE FOR ORDERS: January 3rd.
PRICE PER ADDITIONAL COPY: Only £1.75 ($4).

PUBLISHED DECEMBER 20TH

Phoenix Association

presents from **riverside studios** in Hammersmith

MONOCHROME

TIME TRAVELLERS

1963-1969



Britain's premier convention specialists are at last bringing their expertise to the Capital with MONOCHROME TIME-TRAVELLERS.

During the 1960s Riverside Studios were owned by the BBC and many notable programmes were made there, including "Adam Adamant", "Dixon of Dock Green", "Hancock's Half Hour", "Out of the Unknown" and "Doctor Who". Since we will be taking a detailed look at the creation of Doctor Who and its original concept, what better place to hold this exciting event than Riverside Studios.

The last episode of "The Trial of a Time Lord" shown live will round off the day's programme.

Make sure you register as the Phoenix team will once again be using their considerable experience and expertise to bring you a fun-packed, stimulating and imaginative programme.

Registration for this exciting event costs £9.00 for Members and £10.00 for non-Members.

I wish to register for MONOCHROME TIME-TRAVELLERS and enclose a cheque/Postal Order for £ made payable to PHOENIX ASSOCIATION together with an SAE (9" x 6½") for confirmation of registration.

NAME IN FULL: .....
ADDRESS: .....
.....
.....

Please send the completed form to:

PHOENIX REGISTRATION OFFICE
31 BIRDHILL AVENUE
READING RG2 7JT

Membership No: .....